

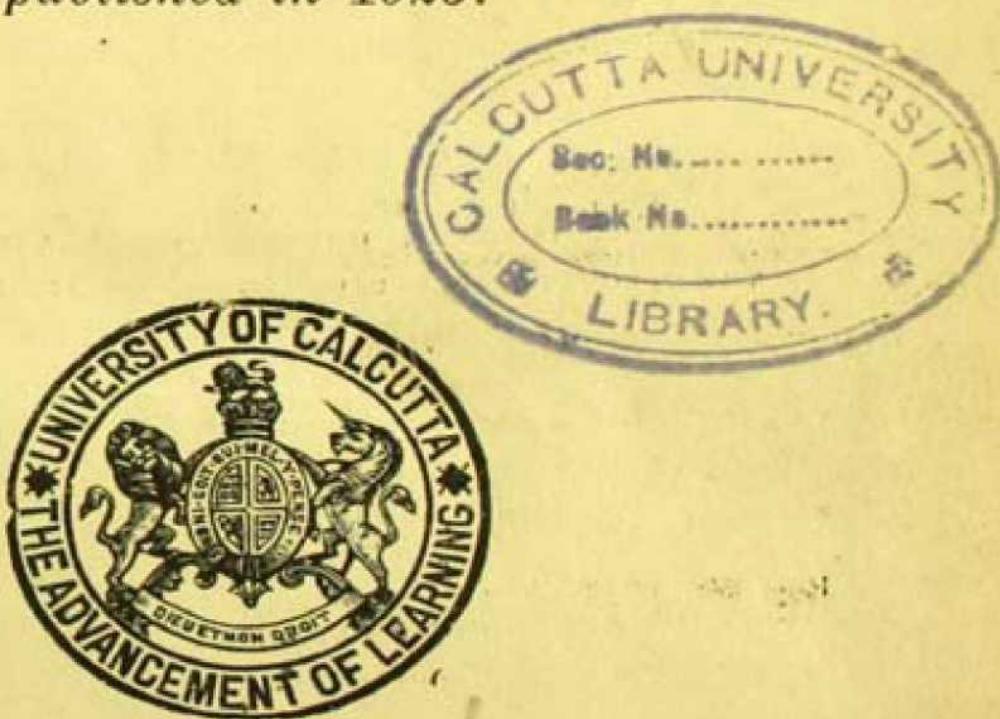
LAHIRI'S SELECT POEMS



LAHIRI'S SELECT POEMS

IN FIVE PARTS

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PREFACE

"Lahiri's Select Poems" was originally compiled by three head masters in collaboration. Prompted by the wish to keep alive the memory of his parents, the late Mr. S. K. Lahiri made a gift of the copyright of the book to the University, on condition that the sale proceeds of the book should be utilized to create a fund out of which two gold medals to be called "Lahiri Medals" might be awarded annually to the two candidates standing highest in the B.A. Examination, in the subject of Mental and Moral Philosophy. Subsequently, in 1914, the Syndicate, at the suggestion of the donor and with the sanction of the Senate, founded a research fellowship in the history of Bengali language and literature, to be maintained out of the income of the above-mentioned fund, supplemented by grants from the fee fund of the University, and have named the fellowship after the late Babu Ramtanu Lahiri, the father of the donor.

The work has been thrice revised: on the first occasion by Professors Webb and Aldis, and on the second and third by special committees appointed by the Syndicate of the Calcutta University.

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LAHIRI'S SELECT POEMS

PART I

i

DRIVE THE NAIL ARIGHT

DRIVE the nail aright, boys,
 Hit it on the head ;
Strike with all your might, boys,
 While the iron's red.

When you've work to do, boys,
 Do it with a will ;
They who reach the top, boys,
 First must climb the hill.

Standing at the foot, boys,
 Looking at the sky,
How can you get up, boys,
 If you never try ?

Though you stumble oft, boys,
 Never be downcast ;
Try, and try again, boys—
 You will win at last.

Drive the nail aright, boys,
 Hit it on the head ; *
Strike with all your might, boys,
 While the iron's red.



THE ANT AND THE CRICKET

A SILLY young cricket, accustomed to sing
Through the warm, sunny months of gay summer
and spring,

Began to complain, when he found that at home
His cupboard was empty and winter was come.

Not a crumb to be found
On the snow-covered ground ;
Not a flower could he see,
Not a leaf on a tree :

Oh, what will become,' says the cricket, ' of me ? '

'At last by starvation and famine made bold,
All dripping with wet and all trembling with cold,
Away he set off to a miserly ant,

To see if, to keep him alive, he would grant
Him shelter from rain :
A mouthful of grain
He wished only to borrow,
He'd repay it to-morrow :

If not, he must die of starvation and sorrow.

Says the ant to the cricket, ' I'm your servant
and friend,
But we ants never borrow, we ants never lend ;
But tell me, dear sir, did you lay nothing by
When the weather was warm ? ' Said the cricket,
' Not I.

My heart was so light
That I sung day and night,
For all nature looked gay.'
' You sang, sir, you say ?
Go then,' said the ant, ' and *dance* winter away.'

Thus ending, he hastily lifted the wicket
And out of the door turned the poor little **cricket**.
Though this is a fable, the moral is good :
If you live without work, you must live without food.

3

THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

TOLL for the brave !
The brave that are no more !
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore.

Eight hundred of the brave,
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset ;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.



Toll for the brave !
Brave Kempenfelt is gone ;
His last sea-fight is fought,
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle ;
No tempest gave the shock
She sprang no fatal leak ;
She ran upon no rock.

His sword was in its sheath ;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up,
Once dreaded by our foes !
And mingle with your cup
The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound
And she may float again,
Full charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main.

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er ;
And he and his eight hundred
Must plough the wave no more.

PART I

5

4

LUCY GRAY

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray :
And when I cross'd the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew ;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door !

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green ;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

" To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go,
And take a lantern, child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

" That, father ! will I gladly do :
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon ! "

At this the father raised his hook,
And snapp'd a faggot band ;
He plied his work ;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe :
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time :
She wander'd up and down :
And many a hill did Lucy climb :
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide ;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At daybreak on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor ;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood
A furlong from their door.

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried
“ In heaven we all shall meet ! ”
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

PART I

7

Then downward from the steep hill's edge
They track'd the foot-marks small ;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone wall :

And then an open field they crossed :
The marks were still the same ;
They track'd them on, nor ever lost ;
And to the bridge they came.

They follow'd from the snowy bank
Those foot-marks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank ;
And farther there were none !

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child ;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind :
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.



AFTER BLENHEIM

IT was a summer evening
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun ;
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round
Which he beside the rivulet
In playing there had found ;
He came to ask what he had found
That was so large and smooth and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy
Who stood expectant by ;
And then the old man shook his head,
And with a natural sigh,
'Tis some poor fellow's skull,' said he,
'Who fell in the great victory.'

' I find them in the garden,
For there's many here about ;
And often when I go to plough,
The ploughshare turns them out ;
For many thousand men,' said he,
' Were slain in the great victory.'

PART I

9

' Now tell us what 'twas all about,'
Young Peterkin he cries ;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes ;
' Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for.'

' It was the English,' Kaspar cried,
' Who put the French to rout ;
But what they fought each other for
I could not well make out.
But everybody said,' quoth he,
' That 'twas a famous victory.'

' My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by ;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly :
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

' With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a wretched mother then
And newborn baby died :
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory..*

' They say it was a shocking sight,
After the field was won,
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun :



But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

'Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won
 And our good Prince Eugene' ;
'Why, 'twas a very wicked thing !'
 Said little Wilhelmine ;
'Nay—nay—my little girl,' quoth he,
'It was a famous victory.'

'And everybody praised the Duke
 Who such a fight did win.'
'But what good came of it at last ?'
 Quoth little Peterkin :—
'Why, that I cannot tell,' said he,
'But 'twas a famous victory.'

6

KING BRUCE AND THE SPIDER

KING Bruce of Scotland flung himself down
 In a lonely mood to think ;
'Tis true he was monarch and wore a crown,
 But his heart was beginning to sink.

For he had been trying to do a great deed,
 To make his people glad ;
He had tried, and tried, but couldn't succeed
 And so he became quite sad.

He flung himself down in low despair,
As grieved as man could be :
And after a while he pondered there,—
“ I'll give it all up,” said he.

Now just at the moment a spider dropped,
With its silken filmy clew ;
And the king in the midst of his thinking stopped,
To see what the spider would do.

’Twas a long way up to the ceiling dome,
And it hung by a rope so fine,
That how it would get to its cobweb home
King Bruce could not divine.

It soon began to cling and crawl
Straight up with strong endeavour !
But down it came with a slipping sprawl,
As near to the ground as ever.

Up, up it ran, nor a second did stay,
To utter the least complaint,
Till it fell still lower ; and there it lay
A little dizzy and faint. .

Its head grew steady—again it went,
And travelled a half yard higher ;
’Twas a delicate thread it had to tread,
And a road where its feet would tire.



Again it fell, and swung below ;
But up it quickly mounted,
Till up and down, now fast, now slow,
Nine brave attempts were counted.

" Sure," said the king, " that foolish thing
Will strive no more to climb,
When it toils so hard to reach and cling,
And tumbles every time."

But up the insect went once more ;
Ah me ! 'tis an anxious minute :
He's only a foot from his cobweb door ;
Oh, say, will he lose or win it ?

Steadily, steadily, inch by inch,
Higher and higher he got,
And a bold little run at the very last pinch
Put him into his native cot.

" Bravo ! Bravo ! " the king cried out ;
" All honour to those who try ;
The spider up there defied despair ;
He conquered, and why should not I ? "

And Bruce of Scotland braced his mind,
And gossips tell the tale,
That he tried once more as he tried before,
And that time he did not fail.

Pay goodly heed, all ye who read,
And beware of saying "I can't;"
'Tis a cowardly word, and apt to lead
To idleness, folly, and want.

Whenever you find your heart despair
Of doing some goodly thing,
Con over this strain, try bravely again,
And remember the Spider and King.

THE CUCKOO

HAIL, beauteous stranger of the grove !
Thou messenger of spring !
Now Heaven repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome sing.

What time the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear ;—
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year ?

Delightful visitant ! with thee
I hail the time of flowers,
And hear the sound of music sweet
From birds among the bowers.

The school-boy wandering through the wood
To pluck the primrose gay,
Starts the new voice of spring to hear,
And imitates thy lay.



What time the pea puts on the bloom,
Thou fliest the vocal vale,
An annual guest, in other lands
Another spring to hail.

Sweet bird ! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear ;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year.

Oh ! could I fly, I'd fly with thee ;
We'd make, with joyful wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the spring.

A FIELD FLOWER

On Finding one in full Bloom, on Christmas day, 1803.

THERE is a flower, a little flower,
With silver crest and golden eye,
That welcomes every changing hour,
And weathers every sky.

The prouder beauties of the field
In gay but quick succession shine,
Race after race their honours yield,
They flourish and decline.

But this small flower, to Nature dear,
While moons and stars their courses run,
Wreathes the whole circle of the year,
Companion of the sun.

It smiles upon the lap of May,
To sultry August spreads its charms,
Lights pale October on his way,
And twines December's arms.

The purple heath and golden broom,
On moory mountains catch the gale,
O'er lawns the lily sheds perfume,
The violet in the vale.

But this bold floweret climbs the hill,
Hides in the forest, haunts the glen,
Plays on the margin of the rill,
Peeps round the fox's den.

Within the garden's cultured round
It shares the sweet carnation's bed ;
And blooms on consecrated ground
In honour of the dead.

The lambkin crops its crimson gem,
The wild-bee murmurs on its breast,
The blue-fly bends its pensile stem,
Light o'er the sky-lark's nest.



'Tis Flora's page;—in every place,
In every season fresh, and fair,
It opens with perennial grace,
And blossoms everywhere.
On waste and woodland, rock and plain,
Its humble buds unheeded rise ;
The rose has but a summer-reign,
The daisy never dies.

9

FRIENDS

FRIEND after friend departs ;
Who hath not lost a friend ?
There is no union here of hearts,
That finds not here an end :
Were this frail world our only rest,
Living or dying, none were blest.

Beyond the flight of time,
Beyond this vale of death,
There surely is some blessed clime
Where life is not a breath,
Nor life's affections transient fire,
Whose sparks fly upward to expire.

PART I

17

There is a world above,
Where parting is unknown—
A whole eternity of love,
Form'd for the good alone ;
And faith beholds the dying here
Translated to that happier sphere.

Thus star by star declines,
Till all are pass'd away,—
As morning high and higher shines
To pure and perfect day ;
Nor sink those stars in empty night,
—They hide themselves in heaven's own light.

10

ON THE DEITY

FROM FERDUSI

ALL hail to his almighty name
Who life on man bestow'd,
And as a guide bade Reason's flame
Illume his darken'd road !



Thou, Lord of life !—thou, Lord of space !
From whom all light doth flow ;
Thou, who has deign'd from wond'rous grace
Salvation's path to show.

Creator of the planets bright ;
Lord of the arch divine ;
From thy effulgence borrowing light
Sun, moon, and stars, do shine.

Thy name, thy shape, and thy abode,
To man are all unknown ;
Betwixt frail beings and their God
A sacred veil is thrown.

For He, who to the human eye
A circle wide has given,
In wisdom did it power deny
To see the ways of Heaven.

To where He sits with glory crown'd
Not thought itself can stray ;
Far, far beyond all earthly bound
Dwells He whom all obey.

Wouldst thou with potent Reason's aid
Pierce through the great design ?
Say, can the wretch his breath has made,
His Maker's power define ?

Weak, erring man ! thy duty here
Is gratitude to shew ;
The Eternal's wisdom to revere,
Nor further seek to know.

11

THE HARE AND MANY FRIENDS

FRIENDSHIP, like love, is but a name,
Unless to one you stint the flame.
'Tis thus in Friendships ; who depend
On many, rarely find a friend.

A hare who, in a civil way,
Complied, with every thing, like Gay,
Was known by all the bestial train
Who haunt the wood, or graze the plain ;
Her care was never to offend ;
And every creature was her friend.

As forth she went at early dawn,
To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn,
Behind she hears the hunter's cries,
And from the deep-mouthed thunder flies.
She starts, she stops, she pants for breath ;
She hears the near advance of death ;
She doubles to mislead the hound,
And measures back her mazy round ;
Till, fainting in the public way,
Half dead with fear she gasping lay.

What transport in her bosom grew,
When first the horse appeared in view !

" Let me," says she, " your back ascend,
And owe my safety to a friend.
You know my feet betray my flight ;
To friendship every burden's light."

The horse replied, " Poor honest puss,
It grieves my heart to see thee thus :
Be comforted, relief is near,
For all your friends are in the rear."

She next the stately bull implor'd ;
And thus replied the mighty lord ;
" Since every beast alive can tell
That I sincerely wish you well,
I may without offence, pretend
To take the freedom of a friend.
Love calls me hence ; a favourite cow
Expects me near yon barley-mow ;
And, when a lady's in the case,
You know, all other things give place.
To leave you thus might seem unkind ;
But see, the goat is just behind."

The goat remarked her pulse was high
Her languid head, her heavy eye :
" My back," says he, " may do you harm ;
The sheep's at hand, and wool is warm."

The sheep was feeble, and complained
His sides a load of wool sustained ;
Said he was slow, confessed his fears ;
For hounds eat sheep as well as hares.

She now the trotting calf addressed,
To save from death a friend distressed.

" Shall I," says he, " of tender age,
In this important care engage ?

BCU 3509

Older and abler pass'd you by ;
How strong are those ! how weak am I !
Should I presume to bear you hence,
Those friends of mine may take offence.
Excuse me, then ; you know my heart ;
But dearest friends, alas ! must part.
How shall we all lament ! Adieu ;
For see the hounds are just in view."

12

• THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

BETWEEN the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower
Comes a pause in the day's occupations
That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra ;
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence ;
Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise.

GS 3745



A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall !
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall.

They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair :
If I try to escape they surround me ;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine !

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old moustache as I am
Is not a match for you all !

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeon
In the round-tower of my heart.

As there will I keep you for ever,
Yes, for ever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away !

HOLD THOU MY HANDS

HOLD Thou my hands !
In grief and joy, in hope and fear,
Lord, let me feel that Thou art near,
Hold Thou my hands !

If e'er by doubts
Of Thy good fatherhood depressed,
I cannot find in Thee my rest,
Hold Thou my hands !

Hold Thou my hands,—
These passionate hands too quick to smite,
These hands so eager for delight,—
Hold Thou my hands !

And when at length,
With darkened eyes and fingers cold,
I seek some last loved hand to hold,
Hold Thou my hands !

LAHIRI'S SELECT POEMS

PART II

14

THE QUIET LIFE

HAPPY the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire ;
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Blest, who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day.

Sound sleep by night ; study and ease
Together mix'd ; sweet recreation,
And innocence, which most does please
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown ;
Thus unlamented let me die ;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.

PATRIOTISM

BREATHES there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
“ This is my own, my native land ! ”
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand ?
If such there breathe, go, mark him well ;
For him no Minstrel raptures swell ;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim ;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentrated all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

THE SCHOLAR

My days among the Dead are past ;
 Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
 The mighty minds of old :
My never-failing friends are they
 With whom I converse day by day.



With them I take delight in weal,
And seek relief in woe ;
And while I understand and feel
How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedew'd
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead ; with them
I live in long past years,
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
Partake their hopes and fears,
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead ; anon
My place with them will be,
And I with them shall travel on
Through all Futurity ;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

TO DAFFODILS

FAIR Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon :
As yet the early rising Sun
Has not attain'd his noon.

PART II

27

Stay, stay,
Until the hastening day
Has run
But to the even-song ;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a Spring ;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or anything.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer's rain ;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew
Ne'er to be found again.

18

THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH

UNDER a spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stands ;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands ;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan ;



His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night
You can hear his bellows blow ;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door ;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,
And sits among his boys ;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice,
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice,
Singing in Paradise.
He needs must think of her once more
How in the grave she lies

PART II

29

And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes ;
Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees it close ;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou has taught !
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought ;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought !

19

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corpse to the rampart we hurried ;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly, at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning ;
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
And the lantern dimly burning.



No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet nor in shroud we wound him ;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak aroun'l him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow ;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we hollowed his narrow bed,
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head
And we far away on the billow !

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him,—
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done,
When the clock struck the hour for retiring ;
And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory ;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone—
But we left him alone with his glory.

THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

JOHN GILPIN was a citizen
 Of credit and renown,
A train-band Captain eke was he
 Of famous London town.

John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear :
 " Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we
 No holiday have seen.

" To-morrow is our wedding-day,
 And we will then repair
Unto the Bell at Edmonton,
 All in a chaise and pair.

" My sister and my sister's child,
 Myselv and children three
Will fill the chaise ; so you must ride
 On horseback after we."

He soon replied, " I do admire
 Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest deār,
 Therefore it shall be done.

" I am a linen-draper bold,
 As all the world doth know,



And my good friend, 'the calender,
Will lend his horse to go.'"

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, " That's well said ;
And for that wine is dear,
We will be furnish'd with our own,
Which is both bright and clear."

John Gilpin kiss'd his loving wife,
O'erjoy'd was he to find
That, though in pleasure she was bent,
She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allow'd
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.

So three doors off the chaise was stay'd
Where they did all get in,
Six precious souls, and all agog
To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad,
The stones did rattle underneath
As if Cheapside were mad.

John Gilpin at his horse's side
Seized fast the flowing mane,

PART II

33

And up he got in haste to ride,
But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reach'd had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head, he saw
Three customers come in.

So down he came; for loss of time
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came down stairs.
"The wine is left behind!"

"Good luck!" quoth he, "yet bring it me,
My leathern belt likewise,
In which I bear my trusty sword
When I do exercise."

Now Mistress Gilpin, (careful soul!)
Had two stone bottles found,
To hold the liquor that she loved,
And keep it safe and sound.

Each bottle had a curling ear,
Through which the belt he drew,



And hung a bottle on each side,
To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be
Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brush'd and neat,
He manfully did throw.

Now see him mounted once again
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones,
With caution and good heed !

But finding soon a smoother road
Beneath his well-shod feet,
The snorting beast began to trot,
Which gall'd him in his seat.

So, ' Fair and softly,' John he cried,
But John he cried in vain :
That trot became a gallop soon,
In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasp'd the mane with both his hands
And eke with all his might.

His horse, who never in that sort
Had handled been before,

PART II

35

What thing upon his back had got
Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought,
 Away went hat and wig;
He little dreamt, when he set out,
 Of running such a rig.

The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,
 Like streamer long and gay,
Till, loop and button failing both,
 At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern
 The bottles he had slung,
A bottle swinging at each side,
 As hath been said or sung.

The dogs did bark, the children scream'd,
 Up flew the windows all,
And every soul cried out, " Well done!"
 As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he?
 His fame soon spread around;
" He carries weight, he rides a race!
 'Tis for a thousand pound!"

And still, as fast as he drew near.
" Twas wonderful to view.



How in a trice the turnpike-men
Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down
His reeking head full low,
The bottles twain behind his back
Were shatter'd at a blow.

Down ran the wine into the road
Most piteous to be seen,
Which made his horse's flanks to smoke
As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced ;
For all might see the bottle-necks
Still dangling at his waist.

Thus all through merry Islington,
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay.

And there he threw the Wash about
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a 'trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.

At Edmonton, his loving wife
From the balcony spied

PART II

37

Her tender husband, wond'ring much
To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin!—Here's the house!"
They all at once did cry;
"The dinner waits, and we are tired."
Said Gilpin—"So am I!"

But yet his horse was not a whit
Inclined to tarry there,
For why? his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew
Shot by an archer strong,
So did he fly—which brings me to
The middle of my song.

Away went Gilpin, out of breath
And sore against his will,
Till at his friend the calender's
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the gate,
And thus accosted him:—

"What news? what news? your tidings tell,
Tell me you must and shall—



Say why bareheaded you are come,
Or why you come at all?"'

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit,
And loved a timely joke ;
And thus unto the calender
In merry guise he spoke :—

" I came because your horse would come ;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here,
They are upon the road."

The calender, right glad to find
His friend in merry pin,
Return'd him not a single word.
But to the house went in.

Whence straight he came with hat and wig,
A wig that flow'd behind,
A hat not much the worse for wear,
Each comely in its kind.

He held them up and in his turn
Thus show'd his ready wit.
" My head is twice as big as yours,
They therefore needs must fit.

" But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face ;

PART II

39

And stop and eat, for well you may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John " It is my wedding-day
And all the world would stare,
If wife should dine at Edmonton,
And I should dine at Ware."

So, turning to his horse, he said,
" I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you came here,
You shall go back for mine."

Ah, luckless speech, and bootless boast,
For which he paid full dear;
For, while he spake, a braying ass
Did sing most loud and clear.

Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And gallop'd off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig;
He lost them sooner than at first,
For why?—they were too big.

Now Mistress Gilpin, when she saw
Her husband posting down

•
Into the country far away,
She pull'd out half a crown :

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the Bell,
" This shall be yours, when you bring back
My husband safe and well."

The youth did ride, and soon did meet
John coming back amain,
Whom in a trice he tried to stop
By catching at his rein ;

But not performing what he meant,
And gladly would have done,
The frightened steed he frightened more,
And made him faster run.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went post-boy at his heels,
The post-boy's horse right glad to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With post-boy scampering in the rear,
They raised the hue and cry :—

" Stop thief ! stop thief !—a highwayman !"
Not one of them was mute,

PART II

41

And all and each that pass'd that way
Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again
Flew open in short space ;
The toll-men thinking, as before,
That Gilpin rode a race.

And so he did, and won it too
For he got first to town ;
Nor stopp'd till where he first got up
He did again get down.

Now let us sing, Long live the king,
And Gilpin, long live he !
And when he next doth ride abroad,
May I be there to see !

21

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

YE Mariners of England
That guard our native seas !
Whose flag has braved, a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze—
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe :
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow ;
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave—
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave :
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell,
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow ;
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep ;
Her march is o'er the mountain wave,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak
She quells the floods below,
As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy winds do blow ;
When the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.

The meteor-flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn ;
Till danger's troubled night depart,
And the star of peace return.
Then, then ye ocean-warriors !
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow ;

PART II

43

When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow.

22

EPITAPH ON A HARE

HERE lies, whom hound did ne'er pursue,
Nor swifter greyhound follow,
Whose foot ne'er tainted morning dew,
Nor ear heard huntsman's halloo;

Old Tiney, surliest of his kind,
Who, nursed with tender care,
And to domestic bounds confined,
Was still a wild Jack hare.

Though duly from my hand he took
His pittance every night,
He did it with a jealous look,
And, when he could, would bite.

His diet was of wheaten bread,
And milk, and oats, and straw;
Thistles, or lettuces instead,
With sand to scour his maw.

On twigs of hawthorn he regaled,
On pippins' russet peel,
And, when his juicy salads failed,
Sliced carrot pleased him well.

A Turkey carpet was his lawn,
Whereon he loved to bound,
To skip and gambol like a fawn,
And swing his rump around.

His frisking was at evening hours,
For then he lost his fear,
But most before approaching showers,
Or when a storm drew near.

Eight years and five round-rolling moons
He thus saw steal away,
Dozing out all his idle noons,
And every night at play.

I kept him for his humour's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to smile.

But now beneath his walnut shade,
He finds his long last home,
And waits, in snug concealment laid,
Till gentler Puss shall come.

He, still more aged, feels the shocks
From which no care can save,
And, partner once of Tiney's box,
Must soon partake his grave.

23

TO BLOSSOMS

FAIR pledges of a fruitful tree,
Why do ye fall so fast?
Your date is not so past,
But you may stay yet here awhile,
To blush and gently smile,
And go at last.

What! were ye born to be
An hour or half's delight,
And so to bid good-night?
'Twas pity Nature brought you forth
Merely to show your worth,
And lose you quite.

But you are lovely leaves, where we
May read how soon things have
Their end, though ne'er so brave:
And after they have shown their pride
Like you awhile, they glide
Into the grave.

24

AN ODE

THE spacious firmament on high
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim.



Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display ;
And publishes, to every land,
The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale ;
And nightly, to the listening earth,
Repeats the story of her birth ;
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets, in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What, though in solemn silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball ;
What though no real voice nor sound,
Amidst their radiant orbs be found ;
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice :
For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine.

THE SOLDIER'S DREAM

OUR bugles sang truce, for the night-cloud had
lowered
And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky ;
And thousands had sunk on the ground overpowered,
The weary to sleep, and the wounded to die.



PART II

47

When reposing that night on my pallet of straw
By the wolf-scaring faggot that guarded the slain,
At the dead of the night a sweet Vision I saw
And thrice ere the morning I dreamt it again.

Methought from the battle-field's dreadful array
 Far, far, I had roamed on a desolate track:
"Twas Autumn,—and sunshine arose on the way
 To the home of my fathers, that welcomed me back.

Then pledged we the wine-cup, and fondly I swore
From my home and my weeping friends never to
part,

My little ones kissed me a thousand times o'er
And my wife sobbed aloud in her fulness of heart.

Stay—stay with us!—rest!—thou art weary and
worn!—

And fain was their war-broken soldier to stay;
But sorrow returned with the dawning of morn,
And the voice in my dreaming ear melted away.



THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS

OFT in the stilly night
 Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
 Of other days around me:
 The smiles, the tears
 Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken ;
 The eyes that shone,
 Now dimm'd and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken

Thus in the stilly night
 Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
 Of other days around me.

When I remember all
 The friends so link'd together
I've seen around me fall
 Like leaves in wintry weather,
 I feel like one
 Who treads alone
Some banquet-hall deserted,
 Whose lights are fled
 Whose garlands dead,
 And all but he departed !

Thus in the stilly night
 Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
 Of other days around me.

THE HAPPY LIFE

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will ;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill !

Whose passions not his masters are,
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Not tied unto the world with care
Of public fame or private breath ;

Who hath his life from rumours freed ;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make accusers great ;

Who God doth late and early pray,
More of his grace than gifts to lend ;
And entertains the harmless day
With a well-chosen book or friends ;

—This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall ;
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And, having nothing, yet hath all.



ENGLAND'S DEAD

Son of the ocean isle !
Where sleep your mighty dead ?
Show me what high and stately pile
Is reared o'er Glory's bed.

Go, stranger ! track the deep,
Free, free, the white sail spread !
Wave may not foam, nor wild wind sweep,
Where rest not England's dead.

On Egypt's burning plains,
By the pyramid o'erswayed,
With fearful power the noon-day reigns,
And the palm-trees yield no shade.

But let the angry sun
From heaven look fiercely red,
Unfelt by those whose task is done !
There slumber England's dead.

The hurricane hath might
Along the Indian shore,
And far, by Ganges' banks at night,
Is heard the tiger's roar.

But let the sound roll on !
It hath no tone of dread
For those that from their toils are gone ;
—There slumber England's dead.

Loud rush the torrent-floods
The western wilds among,
And free, in green Columbia's woods,
The hunter's bow is strung.

But let the floods rush on !
Let the arrow's flight be sped !
Why should they reck whose task is done ?
There slumber England's dead !

The mountain-storms rise high
In the snowy Pyrenees,
And toss the pine boughs through the sky,
Like rose-leaves on the breeze.

But let the storm rage on !
Let the forest-wreaths be shed !
For the Roncesvalles' field is won,
There slumber England's dead.

On the frozen deep's repose
'Tis a dark and dreadful hour,
When round the ship the ice-fields close,
To chain her with their power.

But let the ice drift on !
Let the cold-blue desert spread !
Their course with mast and flag is done,
There slumber England's dead.



The warlike of the isles,
The men of field and wave !
Are not the rocks their funeral piles,
The seas and shores their grave ?

29

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.
To her fair works did nature link
The human soul that through me ran ;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that sweet bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths ;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played ;
Their thoughts I cannot measure :—
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

PART II

58

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air ;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

From Heaven if this belief be sent,
If such be nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man ?

30

TO THE WINDS

YE viewless Minstrels of the sky !
I marvel not, in times gone by
That ye were deified :
For, even in this later day,
To me oft has your power, or play,
Unearthly thoughts supplied.

Awful your power ! when, by your might
You heave the wild waves, crested white,
Like mountains in your wrath ;
Ploughing between them valleys deep,
Which, to the seaman rous'd from sleep,
Yawn like death's opening path !



Graceful your play ! when, round the bower
Where Beauty culls Spring's loveliest flower.
To wreath her dark locks there,
Your gentlest whispers lightly breathe
The leaves between, flit round that wreath,
And stir her silken hair.

Still, thoughts like these are but of earth,
And you can give far loftier birth :—
Ye come !—we know not whence !
Ye go !—can mortals trace your flight ?
All imperceptible to sight ;
Though audible to sense :

The Sun,—his rise, and set we know ;
The Sea,—we mark its ebb, and flow ;
The Moon,—her wax, and wane ;
The Stars,—Man knows their courses well,
The Comet's vagrant path can tell :—
But you his search disdain.

Ye restless, homeless, shapeless things !
Who mock all our imaginings,
Like spirits in a dream ;
What epithet can words supply
Unto the bard who takes such high
Unmanageable theme ?

But one ;—to me, when Fancy stirs
My thoughts, ye seem HEAVEN'S MESSENGERS,
Who leave no path untrod ;

And when, as now, at midnight's hour,
I hear your voice in all its power,
It seems the VOICE OF GOD.

31

THE CALL

I WALKED with one whose child had lately died.
We passed the little folk i' the street at play,
When suddenly a clear voice ' Father ! ' cried ;
The man turned quick and glad ; sighed ; moved
away.

I spoke not, but 'twas given me to discern
The love that watches through th' eternal years;
God surely must so start and quickly turn
Whene'er the cry of ' Father ! ' strikes his ears.



LAHIRI'S SELECT POEMS

PART III

82

DEATH THE LEVELLER

THE glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things ;
There is no armour against fate ;
Death lays his icy hand on kings :
Sceptre and crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill :
But their strong nerves at last must yield ;
They tame but one another still ;
Early or late
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath,
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

The garlands wither on your brow ;
Then boast no more your mighty deeds.

PART III

57

Upon Death's purple altar now
See where the victor-victim bleeds :
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb.
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in their dust.

33

THE DAFFODILS

I WANDER'D lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky-way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay :
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced ; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee :—
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company !
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought ;



For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

34

RULE, BRITANNIA

WHEN Britain first, at Heaven's command,
Arose from out the azure main,
This was the charter of her land,
And guardian angels sang the strain :
Rule, Britannia, rule the waves !
Britons never will be slaves.

The nations not so blest as thee
Must in their turn to tyrants fall ;
Whilst thou shalt flourish, great and free,
The dread and envy of them all.

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke ;
As the loud blast that tears the skies
Serves but to root thy native oak.

Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame ;
All their attempts to bend thee down
Will but arouse thy generous flame,
And work their woe and thy renown.

PART III

59

To thee belongs the rural reign ;
Thy cities shall with commerce shine ;
All thine shall be the subject main,
And every shore it circles thine !

The Muses, still with Freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coast repair ;
Blest isle, with matchless beauty crowned,
And manly hearts to guard the fair :
Rule, Britannia, rule the waves !
Britons never will be slaves.

35

ADDRESS TO THE DEITY

THOU art, O God ! the life and light
Of all this wondrous world we see ;
Its glow by day, its smile by night,
Are but reflections caught from Thee :
Where'er we turn, Thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are Thine.

When day, with farewell beam, delays
Among the opening shades of even,
And we can almost think we gaze
Through golden vistas into heaven ;
Those hues, that mark the sun's decline,
So soft, so radiant, Lord ! are Thine.



When night, with wings of starry gloom,
O'ershadows all the earth and skies,
Like some dark, beauteous bird, whose plume
Is sparkling with unnumbered eyes ;
That sacred gloom, those fires divine,
So grand, so countless, Lord ! are Thine.

When youthful spring around us breathes,
Thy spirit warms her fragrant sigh ;
And every flower the summer wreathes,
Is born beneath that kindling eye :
Where'er we turn, Thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are Thine.

36

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

I

HALF a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

' Forward, the Light Brigade !
Charge for the guns ! ' he said :
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II

' Forward, the Light Brigade ! '
Was there a man dismay'd ?

PART III

61

Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd :
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die :
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
 Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of hell
 Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
 All the world wonder'd :
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke ;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
 Shatter'd and sunder'd.



Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

W

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the Mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade ?
O the wild charge they made !
 All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made !
Honour the Light Brigade,
 Noble six hundred !

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

THE Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold ;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the

When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

PART III

63

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen :
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath
blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed ;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew
still.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his
pride :
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail ;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal ;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord !



THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

A CHILD'S STORY

I

HAMELIN Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city ;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its walls on the southern side ;
A pleasanter spot you never spied ;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, 'twas a pity.

II

Rats !
They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own
ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

III

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking ;

" 'Tis clear,'" cried they, " our Mayor's a noddy ;
And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin !
You hope, because you're old and obese,
 To find in the furry civic robe ease.
Rouse up, Sirs ! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing !"

At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV

An hour they sat in council.

At length the Mayor broke silence :
" For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell ;
I wish I were a mile hence !
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—
I'm sure my poor head aches again
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap !"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap ?
" Bless us," cried the Mayor, " what's that ?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat !"

V

" Come in!"—the Mayor cried, looking bigger ;
And in did come the strangest figure !

His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red ;
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in—
There was no guessing his kith and kin !
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire :
Quoth one : “ It’s as if my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom’s tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tomb-stone ! ”

VI

He advanced to the council-table :
And, “ Please your honours,” said he, “ I’m able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun
That creep, or swim, or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw !
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole, and toad, and newt, and viper ;
And people call me the Pied Piper.”
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same check ;
And at the scarf’s end hung a pipe ;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing

Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
" Yet," said he, " Poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarm of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampyre bats:
And, as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
" One? fifty thousand!"—was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled
Like a candle flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe had uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling,
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.—
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,



Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
 Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser
Wherein all plunged and perished,
—Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary,
Which was, " At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe:
And a moving away of pickle-tub boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter casks:
And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, ' Oh rats, rejoice !
The world is grown one vast drysaltery !
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, dinner, supper, luncheon !'
And just as a bulky sugar puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, ' Come, bore me !'
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple;
" Go," cried the Mayor, " and get long poles!
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!"—when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, " First, if you please, my thousand
guilders!"

IX

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation too.
For Council dinners made rare havock
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish;
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow!
" Besides," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
" Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But, as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Besides, our losses have made us thrifty;
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"



X

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
" No trifling ! I can't wait, beside !
I've promised to visit by dinner time
Baghdad, and accept the prime
Of the Head Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor.
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver !
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe to another fashion."

XI

" How ? " cried the Mayor, " d'ye think I'll brook
Being worse treated than a Cook ?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald ?
You threaten us, fellow ? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst ! "

XII

Once more he stept into the street ;
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane ;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet'musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air),
There was a rustling that seem'd to like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,

Little hands clapping, and little tongues chattering
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is
scattering,

Out came the children running;
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step or cry
To the children merrily skipping by—
And could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back
And now the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
“ He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!”
When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,

As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed ;
And the piper advanced and the children follow'd
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast,
Did I say all ? No ! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way ;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,—
“ It's dull in our town since my playmates left !
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me ;
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And every thing was strange and new ;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings ;
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And I found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more.”

XIV

The Mayor sent East, West, North and South,
To offer the Piper by word of mouth,

Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancer were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never

Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,

" And so long after what happened here
On the Twenty-second of July,

Thirteen hundred and seventy-six ; "

And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern

To shock with mirth a street so solemn ;
But opposite the place of the cavern

They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away ;
And there it stands to this very day.

And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there is a tribe
Of alien people who ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen



Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land.
But how or why they don't understand.

xv

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers :
And, whether they pipe us free from rats or from mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise.

39

THIS WORLD IS ALL A FLEETING SHOW

THIS world is all a fleeting show,
For man's illusion given ;
The smiles of Joy, the tears of Woe,
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow—
There's nothing true but Heaven !

And false the light on Glory's plume,
As fading hues of Even ;
And Love, and Hope, and Beauty's bloom,
Are blossoms gather'd for the tomb.—
There's nothing bright but Heaven !

Poor wanderers of a stormy day,
From wave to wave we're driven,
And Fancy's flash, and Reason's ray,
Serve but to light the troubled way—
There's nothing calm but Heaven!

40

IVAN THE CZAR

HE sat in silence on the ground,
The old and haughty Czar,
Lonely, though princes girt him round,
And leaders of the war;
He had cast his jewelled sabre,
That many a field had won,
To the earth beside his youthful dead—
His fair and first-born son.

With a robe of ermine for its bed
Was laid that form of clay,
Where the light, a stormy sunset shed,
Through the rich tent made way;
And a sad and solemn beauty
On the pallid face came down,
Which the lord of nations mutely watched,
In the dust, with his renown.

Low tones at last of woe and fear
From his full bosom broke;



A mournful thing it was to hear
How then the proud man spoke,
The voice that through the combat
Had shouted far and high,
Came forth in strange, dull, hollow tones,
Burdened with agony.

" There is no crimson on thy cheek,
And on thy lip no breath ;
I call thee, and thou dost not speak ;
They tell me this is death !
And fearful things are whispering
That I the deed have done !
For the honour of thy father's name,
Look up, look up, my son.

" Well might I know death's hue and mien ;
But on thine aspect, boy,
What, till this moment, have I seen
Save pride and tameless joy ?
Swiftest thou wert to battle,
And bravest there of all ;
How could I think a warrior's frame
Thus like a flower should fall ?

" I will not bear that still cold look—
Rise up, thou fierce and free !
Wake as the storm wakes ! I will brook
All, save this calm, from thee.
Lift brightly up, and proudly,
Once more thy kindling eyes ;

PART III

77

Hath my word lost its power on earth?
I say to thee, arise!

" Didst thou not know I loved thee well?
Thou didst not! and art gone
In bitterness of soul, to dwell
Where man must dwell alone.
Come back, young fiery spirit!
If but one hour, to learn
The secrets of the folded heart,
That seemed to thee so stern.

" Thou wert the first, fair child
That in mine arms I pressed;
Thou wert the bright one that hast smiled
Like summer on my breast.
I reared thee as an eagle,
To the chase thy steps I led,
I bore thee on my battle-horse,—
I look upon thee—dead!

" Lay down my warlike banners here,
Never again to wave,
And bury my red sword and spear,
Chiefs, in my first-born's grave;
And leave me! I have conquered,
I have slain—my work is done!
Whom have I slain? Ye answer not;
Thou too art mute, my son!"

And thus his wild lament was poured
Through the dark resounding night,



And the battle knew no more his sword,
Nor the foaming steed his might.
He heard strange voices moaning
In every wind that sighed ;
From the searching stars of heaven he shrank—
Humbly the conqueror died.

47

THE OLD ARM-CHAIR

In childhood's hour I lingered near
The hallowed seat with list'ning ear ;
And gentle words that mother would give,
To fit me to die, and teach me to live ;
She told me shame would never betide,
With truth for my creed, and God for my guide ;
She taught me to lisp my earliest prayer
As I knelt beside that old arm-chair.

PART III

79

I sat and watched her many a day,
When her eyes grew dim and her locks were gray,
And I almost worshipped her when she smiled,
And turned from her Bible to bless her child.
Years rolled on ; but the last one sped—
My idol was shattered, my earth-star fled :
I learnt how much the heart can bear
When I saw her die in that old arm-chair.

'Tis past ! 'tis past ! But I gaze on it now
With quivering breath and throbbing brow.
'Twas there she nursed me,—'twas there she
died,
And memory flows with lava tide.
Say it is folly and deem me weak,
While the scalding tears run down my cheek,
But I love it,—I love it ! and cannot tear
My soul from my mother's old arm-chair.

42

THE BETTER LAND

" I HEAR thee speak of the better land,
Thou callest its children a happy band ;
Mother ! oh where is that radiant shore ?
Shall we not seek it, and weep no more ?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
And the fire-flies glance through the myrtle boughs ?"
—“ Not there, not there, my child ! ”



" Is it where the feathery palm-trees rise,
And the date grows ripe under sunny skies ?
Or 'midst the green islands of glittering seas,
Where fragrant forests perfume the breeze,
And strange, bright birds, on their starry wings,
Bear the rich hues of all glorious things ? "

— " Not there, not there, my child ! "

" Is it far away, in some region old,
Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold ? —
Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
And the diamond lights up the secret mine,
And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand ? —
Is it there, sweet mother, the better land ? "

— " Not there, not there, my child ! "

" Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy !
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy ;
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair —
Sorrow and death may not enter there ;
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom,
Far beyond the clouds, and beyond the tomb,
— It is there, it is there, my child ! "

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

I

THE King was on his throne :
The satraps throng'd the hall :
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival.

PART III

81

A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah deem'd divine
Jehovah's vessels, hold
The godless Heathen's wine.

II

In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote as if on sand,
The fingers of a man ;
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
And traced them like a wand.

III

The monarch saw, and shook,
And bade no more rejoice ;
All bloodless wax'd his look,
And tremulous his voice.
" Let the men of lore appear,
The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear,
Which mar our royal mirth."

IV

Chaldea's seers are good,
But here they have no skill ;
And the unknown letters stood
Untold and awful still..



And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore ;
But now they were not sage,
They saw—but knew no more.

V

A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
He saw that writing's truth,
The lamps around were bright,
The prophecy in view ;
He read it on that night,
The morrow proved it true.

VI

" Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom pass'd away,
He, in the balance weigh'd
Is light and worthless clay ;
The shroud his robe of state,
His canopy the stone ;
The Mede is at his gate !
The Persian on his throne ! "

44

OLD AGE

THE seas are quiet when the winds give o'er,
So calm are we when passions are no more;
For then we know how vain it was to boast
Of fleeting things, too certain to be lost.
Clouds of affection from our younger eyes,
Conceal that emptiness which age despises.

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that Time has made;
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home:
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

45

SANTA FILOMENA

WHENE'ER a noble deed is wrought,
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
Our hearts, in glad surprise,
To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls
Into our inmost being rolls,
And lifts us unawares
Out of all meaner cares.



Honour to those words or deeds
That help us in our daily needs ;
And by their overflow
Raise us from what is low !

Thus thought I, as by night I read
Of the great army of the dead,
The trenches cold and damp,
The starved and frozen camp,—

The wounded from the battle-plain,
In dreary hospitals of pain,
The cheerless corridors,
The cold and stony floors.

Lo ! in that house of misery
A lady with a lamp I see
Pass through the glimmering gloom,
And flit from room to room.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss
Her shadow, as it falls
Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be
Opened and then closed suddenly,
The vision came and went,
The light shone and was spent.

On England's annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
That light its rays shall cast
From portals of the past.

A Lady with a Lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good,
Heroic womanhood.

Nor even shall be wanting here
The palm, the lily, and the spear,
The symbols that of yore
Saint Filomena bore.

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX

I

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts
undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.



II

Not a word to each other ; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our
place ;

I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

III

'Twas moonset at starting ; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew, and twilight dawned clear ;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see ;
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be ;
And from Mechlin church-steeple we heard the
half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, " Yet there is time ! "

IV

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one.
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze as some bluff river headland its spray.

V

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent
back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track ;

PART III

87

And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

VI

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, " Stay
spur;
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
We'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick
wheeze
Of her chest, saw her stretched neck and staggering
knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

VII

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like
chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And " Gallop," gasped Joris, " for Aix is in sight!"

VIII

" How they'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his
roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate;



With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

IX

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without
peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise,
bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

X

And all I remember is, friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground,
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news
from Ghent.

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

FATHER of all ! in ev'ry age,
In ev'ry clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove or Lord !

PART III

89

Thou Great First Cause, least understood :

Who all my sense confined
To know but this, that Thou art good,
And that myself am blind ;

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
To see the good from ill ;
And binding Nature fast in Fate
Left free the human will.

What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This, teach me more than hell to shun,
That, more than Heaven pursue.

What blessings Thy free bounty gives,
Let me not cast away ;
For God is paid when man receives :
To enjoy is to obey.

Yet not to earth's contracted span
Thy goodness let me bound,
Or think Thee Lord alone of man,
When thousand worlds are round.

If I am right, Thy grace impart,
Still in the right to stay ;
If I am wrong, oh, teach my heart
To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish pride,
Or impious discontent,
At aught Thy wisdom has denied,
Or aught Thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see ;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

Mean though I am, not wholly so,
Since quicken'd by Thy breath ;
Oh ! lead me wheresoever I go,
Through this day's life or death.

This day, be bread and peace my lot ;
All else beneath the sun,
Thou know'st if bestowed or not ;
And let Thy will be done.

To Thee, whose temple is all space,
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies,
One chorus let all beings raise ;
All nature's incense rise !

ODE TO EVENING

HAIL meek-eyed maiden, clad in sober gray,
Whose soft approach the weary woodman loves ;
As homeward bent to kiss his prattling babes,
Jocund he whistles through the twilight groves.

PART III

91

When Phœbus sinks behind the gilded hills,
You lightly o'er the misty meadows walk ;
The drooping daisies bathe in honey-dews,
And nurse the nodding violet's tender stalk.

The panting Dryads, that in day's fierce heat
To inmost bowers and cooling caverns ran,
Return to trip in wanton evening dance ;
Old Silvan too returns, and laughing Pan.

To the deep wood the clamorous rooks repair,
Light skims the swallow o'er the watery scene ;
And from the sheep-cote and fresh furrowed field
Stout ploughmen meet, to wrestle on the green.

The swain, that artless sings on yonder rock,
His supping sheep and lengthening shadow spies ;
Pleased with the cool, the calm, refreshful hour,
And with hoarse humming of unnumbered flies.

Now every passion sleeps : desponding Love,
And pining Envy, ever-restless Pride ;
A holy calm creeps o'er my peaceful soul,
Anger and mad Ambition's storms subside.

O modest Evening ! oft let me appear
A wandering votary in thy pensive train ;
Listening to every wildly warbling throat
That fills with farewell sweet thy darkening plain.



49

A CHILD'S THOUGHT OF GOD

• I

THEY say that God lives very high ;
But if you look above the pines
You cannot see our God ; and why ?

II

And if you dig down in the mines
You never see Him in the gold ;
Though from Him all that's glory shines.

III

God is so good, He wears a fold
Of heaven and earth across His face—
Like secrets kept, for love, untold.

IV

But still I feel that His embrace
Slides down by thrills, through all things
made,
Through sight and sound of every place.

V

As if my tender mother laid
On my shut lips her kisses' pressure,
Half waking me at night, and said
" Who kissed you through the dark, dear
guesser ? "

50

A MORNING HYMN

AWAKE, my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily stage of duty run ;
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise
To pay thy morning sacrifice.

Wake and lift up thyself, my heart,
And with the angels bear thy part,
Who all night long unwearied sing
High praise to the Eternal King.

All praise to Thee, who safe hast kept,
And hast refreshed me whilst I slept !
Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake,
I may of endless light partake.

Heaven is, dear Lord, where'er Thou art ;
O never then from me depart !
For, to my soul, 'tis hell to be
But for one moment void of Thee.

Lord, I my vows to Thee renew ;
Disperse my sins as morning dew ;
Guard my first springs of thought and will,
And with Thyself my spirit fill.

Direct, control, suggest, this day,
All I design, or do, or say ;
That all my powers, with all their might,
In thy sole glory may unite.



THE BROOK

I COME from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river:
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling.

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots ;
I slide by hazel covers ;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows ;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses ;
I linger by my shingly bars ;
I loiter round my cresses ;



And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go.
But I go on for ever.

52

A WINTER MORNING

'Tis morning; and the sun, with ruddy orb,
Ascending, fires th' horizon; while the clouds
That crowd away before the driving wind,
More ardent as the disk emerges more,
Resemble most some city in a blaze,
Seen through the leafless wood. His slanting ray
Slides ineffectual down the snowy vale,
And, tinged all with his own rosy hue,
From ev'ry herb and ev'ry spiry blade
Stretches a length of shadow o'er the field,
Mine, spindling into longitude immense,
In spite of gravity, and sage remark
That I myself am but a fleeting shade,
Provokes me to a smile. With eye askance
I view the muscular proportion'd limb
Transform'd to a lean shank. The shapeless pair,
As they design'd to mock me, at my side
Take step for step; and, as I near approach
The cottage, walk along the plaster'd wall
Preposterous sight! the legs without the man.
The verdure of the plain lies buried deep

Beneath the dazzling deluge ; and the bents,
And coarser grass, upspearing o'er the rest
Of late unsightly and unseen, now shine
Conspicuous, and in bright apparel clad,
And, fledg'd with icy feathers, nod superb.
The cattle mourn in corners, where the fence
Screens them, and seem half petrified to sleep
In unrecumbent sadness. There they wait
Their wonted fodder ; not like hung'ring man,
Fretful if unsupplied ; but silent, meek,
And patient of the slow-pac'd swain's delay.
He from the stack carves out th' accustom'd load,
Deep plunging, and again deep plunging oft,
His broad keen knife into the solid mass :
Smooth as a wall the upright remnant stands,
With such undeviating and even force
He severs it away : no needless care,
Lest storms should overset the leaning pile
Deciduous, or its own unbalanc'd weight.
Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcern'd
The cheerful haunts of man ; to wield the axe,
And drive the wedge, in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears,
And tail cropp'd short, half lurcher and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel
Now creeps he slow ; and now, with many a frisk
Wide-scamp'ring, snatches up the drifted snow
With iv'ry teeth, or plows it with his snout ;
Then shakes his powder'd coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark ; nor stops for aught,



But now and then with pressure of his thumb
T' adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,
That fumes beneath his nose; the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air.

53

THE PALM TREE

It waved not through an eastern sky,
Beside a fount of Araby;
It was not fanned by southern breeze
In some green isle of Indian seas,
Nor did its graceful shadow sleep
O'er stream, of Afric, lone and deep.

But fair the exile palm-tree grew
Midst foliage of no kindred hue;
Through the laburnum's dropping gold
Rose the light shaft of orient mould,
And Europe's violets, faintly sweet,
Purpled the moss-beds at its feet.

Strange looked it there—the willow streamed
Where silvery waters near it gleamed;
The lime-bough lured the honey-bee
To murmur by the desert's tree,
And showers of snowy roses made
A lustre in its fan-like shade.

There came an eve of festal hours—
Rich music filled that garden's bowers ;
Lamps that from flowering branches hung,
On sparks of dew soft colour flung,
And bright forms glanced—a fairy show—
Under the blossoms to and fro.

But one, a lone one, midst the throng,
Seemed reckless of all dance or song :
He was a youth of dusky mien,
Whereon the Indian sun had been,
Of crested brow, and long black hair—
A stranger, like the palm-tree there.

And slowly, sadly, moved his plumes,
Glittering athwart the leafy glooms :
He passed the pale green olives by,
Nor won the chestnut-flowers his eye ;
But when to that sole palm he came,
Then shot a rapture through his frame !

To him, to him, its rustling spoke
The silence of his soul it broke !
It whispered of his own bright isle,
That lit the ocean with a smile ;
Aye, to his ear that native tone
Had something of the sea-wave's moan !

His mother's cabin home, that lay
Where feathery cocoas fringed the bay ;
The dashing of his brethren's oar,
The conch-note heard along the shore ;—



All through his waking bosom swept:
He clasped his country's tree and wept!

Oh! scorn him not!—the strength, whereby
The patriot girds himself to die,
Th' unconquerable power, which fills
The freeman battling on his hills,
These have one fountain deep and clear—
The same whence gushed that child-like tear!

54

SONNET

WRITTEN ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGES

How fraught with music, beauty, and repose,
This holy time, and solitude profound!
The lingering day along the mountain glows;
With songs of birds the twilight woods resound.
Through the soft gloom, yon sacred fanes around,
The radiant fly its mimic lightning throws.
Fair Gunga's stream along the green vale flows,
And gently breathes a thought-awakening sound!
Such hour and scene my spirit loves to hail,
When nature's smile is so divinely sweet—
When every note that trembles on the gale,
Seems caught from realms untrod by mortal feet—
Where everlasting harmonies prevail—
Where rise the purified, their God to greet.

THE BUILDERS

ALL are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time,
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Nothing useless is, or low,
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest.

For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled;
Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.

Truly shape and fashion these;
Leave no yawning gaps between;
Think not, because no man sees,
Such things will remain unseen.

In the elder days of Art
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part;
For the gods see everywhere.

Let us do our work as well,
Both the unseen and the seen,
Make the house, where God may dwell,
Beautiful, entire and clean.



Else our lives are incomplete,
Standing in these walls of Time,
Broken stairways where the feet
Stumble as they seek to climb.

Build to-day, then, strong and sure,
With a firm and ample base,
And ascending and secure
Shall to-morrow find its place.

Thus alone can we attain
To those turrets, where the eye
Sees the world as one vast plain
And one boundless reach of sky.

HOHENLINDEN

ON Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow,
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly :

But Linden saw another sight,
When the drum beat, at dead of night,
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of her scenery.

By torch and trumpet fast array'd,
Each horseman drew his battle-blade,
And furious every charger neigh'd,
To join the dreadful revelry.

Then shook the hills with thunder riven,
Then rush'd the steed to battle driven,
And louder than the bolts of heaven,
Far flash'd the red artillery.

But redder yet that light shall glow
On Linden's hills of stained snow,
And bloodier yet the torrent flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

'Tis morn, but scarce yon level sun
Can pierce the war-clouds' rolling dun,
Where furious Frank, and fiery Hun,
Shout in their sulph'rous canopy.

The combat deepens. On, ye brave,
Who rush to glory, or to grave !
Wave, Munich ! all thy banners wave,
And charge with all thy chivalry !

Few, few, shall part where many meet !
The snow shall be their winding-sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulchre.

LAHIRI'S SELECT POEMS

PART IV

57

SUMMER RAIN

THICK lay the dust, uncomfortably white,
In glaring mimicry of Arab sand.
The woods and mountains slept in hazy light
The meadows looked athirst and tawny tanned ;
The little rills had left their channels bare,
With scarce a pool to witness what they were ;
And the shrunk river gleamed 'mid oozy stones,
That stared like any famished giant's bones.
Sudden the hills grew black, and hot as stove
The air beneath ; it was a toil to be.
There was a growling as of angry Jove,
Provoked by Juno's prying jealousy—
A flash—a crash—the firmament was split,
And down it came in drops—the smallest fit
To drown a bee in fox-glove bell conceal'd ;
Joy filled the brook, and comfort cheered the field.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

THE world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers ;
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
The sea that bare her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gather'd now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune,
It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn,—
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.



Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds :

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care :
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke :
How jocund did they drive their team afield !
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke.

PART IV

107

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour :—
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where, through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death ?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre :

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll ;
Chill penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear :



Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

•

Some village Hampden, that, with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their History in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade ; nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined ;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray ;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.



Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply ;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind ?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires ;
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonoured dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate ;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say :
“ Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn,
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn ;

“ There, at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that bubbles by.

“ Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove ;
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.



" One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

" The next, with dirges due, in sad array,
Slow through the church-way path we saw him
borne,—
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head, upon the lap of Earth,
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown;
Fair Science frown'd not his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere:
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear;
He gain'd from Heaven ('twas all he wish'd) a
friend.

No further seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

60

TO A SKYLARK

ETHereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring warbler!—that love-prompted strain,
—'Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond—
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy Spring.

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine,
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam—
True to the kindred points of heaven and home!

61

THE GIFTS OF GOD

WHEN God at first made Man,
Having a glass of blessing standing by;
Let us (said He) pour on him all we can:
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span.



So strength first made a way ;
Then beauty flow'd, then wisdom, honour, pleasure,
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone, of all His treasure,
 Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should (said He)
Bestow this jewel also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature,
 So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness :
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness led him not, yet weariness
 May toss him to My breast.

62

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

NEAR yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild ;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year ;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place ;
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour ;

Far other aims his heart had learnt to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train ;
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain :
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed ;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe ;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to Virtue's side ;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.
Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt and pain, by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul ;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place ;



Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran ;
Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest ;
Their welfare pleased him and their cares distrest :
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven ;
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Tho' round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view ;—
I knew him well, and every truant knew :
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face ; •
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he ;
Full well the busy whisper circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned.
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault ;
The village all declared how much he knew
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too ;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge :

In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For, even tho' vanquished, he could argue still ;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around ;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed is forgot.

63

UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

EARTH has not anything to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning : silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky,
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
And all that mighty heart is lying still !



AN ODE

How are thy servants blest, O Lord !
How sure is their defence !
Eternal wisdom is their guide,
Their help Omnipotence.

In foreign realms, and lands remote,
Supported by thy care,
Through burning climes I pass'd unhurt,
And breath'd in tainted air.

Thy mercy sweeten'd every soil,
Made every region please ;
The hoary Alpine hills it warm'd,
And smooth'd the Tyrrhene seas.

Think, O my soul, devoutly think,
How, with affrighted eyes,
Thou saw'st the wide-extended deep,
In all its horrors rise.

Confusion dwelt on every face,
And fear in every heart ;
When waves on waves, and gulfs on gulfs,
O'ercame the pilot's art.

Yet then from all my griefs, O Lord !
Thy mercy set me free ;
Whilst in the confidence of prayer,
My soul took hold on thee.

For though in dreadful whirls we hung
High on the broken wave,
I knew thou wert not slow to hear,
Nor impotent to save.

The storm was laid, the winds retir'd
Obedient to thy will ;
The sea, that roar'd at thy command,
At thy command was still.

In midst of dangers, fears, and death,
Thy goodness I'll adore ;
And praise thee for thy mercies past,
And humbly hope for more.

• My life, if thou preserv'st my life,
Thy sacrifice shall be ;
And death, if death must be my doom,
Shall join my soul to thee.

ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year !
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom showeth.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,



That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
Than some more timely happy spirits endueth.
Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven;
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

ON HIS BLINDNESS

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,—
“ Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”
I fondly ask:—But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, “ God doth not need
Either man’s work, or his own gifts. Who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at His bidding speed,
And post o’er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.”

EVENING ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGES

I WANDERED thoughtfully by Ganga's shore,
While the broad sun upon the slumbering wave
Its last faint flush of golden radiance gave,
And tinged with tenderest hues some ruins hoar.
Methinks this earth had never known before
A calm so deep—'twas silent as the grave.
The smallest bird its light wing could not lave
In the smooth flood, nor from the green wood soar
(If but the tiniest branch its pinions stirred,
Or shook the dew-drops from the leaves,) unheard.
Like pictured shadows 'gainst the western beam,
The dark boats slept, while each lone helmsman stood
Still as a statue!—the strange quietude
Enthralled my soul like some mysterious dream.

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S
PICTURE

Oh that those lips had language! . Life has passed
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
“ Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away ! ”



The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalise,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it!) here shines on me still the same.

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
O welcome guest, though unexpected here !
Who bidst me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long.
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own ;
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art she.

My mother ! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun ?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss ;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile ! It answers—Yes.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu !
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.

May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more

Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wish'd, I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived ;
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.
Thus many a sad *to-morrow* came and went
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learnt at last submission to my lot,
But though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor ;
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapt
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet-capped,
"Tis now become a history little known,
That once we called the pastoral house our own.
Short-lived possession ! But the record fair,
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.
Thy nightly visit to my chamber made,
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid ;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit, or confectionary plum ;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed
By thine own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed ;

All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,



Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and brakes,
That humour interposed too often makes :
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.

Could time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I pricked them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile,) Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here ?
I would not trust my heart ;—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed)
Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
Where spices breathe, and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ;

So thou, with sails how swift ! hast reached the shore
" Where tempests never beat nor billows roar ;"
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchored by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distressed,—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-tossed,
Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
Yet, oh, the thought, that thou art safe and he !
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned and rulers of the earth ;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise,—
The son of parents passed into the skies !
And now, farewell—Time unrevoked has run
His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again ;
To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine ;
And, while the wings of fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft,—
Thy self removed, thy power to soothe me left.



THE FORCED RECRUIT

SOLFÉRINO, 1859

I

IN the ranks of the Austrian you found him.
He died with his face to you all ;
Yet bury him here where around him
You honour your bravest that fall.

II

Venetian fair-featured and slender,
He lies shot to death in his youth,
With a smile on his lips over-tender
For any mere soldier's dead mouth.

III

No stranger, and yet not a traitor,
Though alien the cloth on his breast,
Underneath it how seldom a greater
Young heart has a shot sent to rest !

IV

By your enemy tortured and goaded
To march with them, stand in their file,
His musket (see) never was loaded,
He facing your guns with that smile !

PART IV

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▼

As orphans yearn on to their mothers,
He yearned to your patriot bands;
Let me die for our Italy, brothers,
If not in your ranks, by your hands!

VI

'Aim straightly, fire steadily! spare me
A ball in the body which may
Deliver my heart here, and tear me
This badge of the Austrian away!'

VII

So thought he, so died he this morning.
What then? many others have died.
Ay, but easy for men to die scorning
The death-stroke, who fought side by side—

VIII

One tricolor floating above them
Struck down 'mid triumphant acclaims
Of an Italy rescued to love them
And blazon the brass with their names.

IX

But he,—without witness or honour,
Mixed, shamed in his country's regard,
With the tyrants who march in upon her,
Died faithful and passive: 'twas hard.



X

'Twas sublime. In a cruel restriction
Cut off from the guerdon of sons,
With most filial obedience, conviction,
His soul kissed the lips of her guns.

XI

That moves you? Nay, grudge not to show it,
While digging a grave for him here:
The others who died, says your poet,
Have glory,—let *him* have a tear.

70

ABOU BEN ADHEM AND THE ANGEL

ABOU Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold :—
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
“ What writest thou ? ”—The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, “ The names of those who love the Lord.”
“ And is mine one ” said Abou. “ Nay, not so,”
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still ; and said, “ I pray thee then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men.”

The angel wrote, and vanish'd. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And show'd the names whom love of God had blessed,
And lo ! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

71

THE TROSSACKS

I

THE western waves of ebbing day,
Roll'd o'er the glen their level way ;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splinter'd pinnacle ;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent
Form'd turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seem'd fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever deck'd,
Or mosque of eastern architect.



Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lack'd they many a banner fair ;
For, from their shiver'd brows display'd,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrops sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs, of thousand dyes,
Waved in the west wind's summer sighs.

II

Boon nature scatter'd free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child,
Here eglantine embalm'd the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there ;
The primrose pale and violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower ;
Fox-glove and night-shade ; side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Group'd their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath
Gray birch and aspen wept beneath ;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock ;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shatter'd trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seem'd the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrow'd sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glist'ning streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue ;

So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

III.

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim,
As served the wild duck's brood to swim,
Lost for a space, through thickest veering
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark blue mirror trace ;
And farther as the hunter stray'd,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But wave-encircled, seem'd to float,
Like castle girdled with its moat ;
Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

IV

And now, to issue from the glén,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice
A far projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid ;



And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains, that like giants stand
To sentinel enchanted land.

High on the south, huge Ben Venue
Down on the lake in masses threw
Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurl'd
The fragments of an earlier world ;
A wildering forest feather'd o'er
His ruin'd sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben An heaved high his forehead bare.

v

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed.
And, " What a scene were here," he cried,
" For princely pomp, or churchman's pride !
On this bold brow, a lordly tower ;
In that soft vale, a lady's bower ;
On yonder meadow, far away,
The turrets of a cloister gray :
How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn !
How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute
Chime, when the groves were still and mute

And, when the midnight moon should lave
Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matins' distant hum,
While the deep peal's commanding tone
Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
A sainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell—
And bugle, lute and bell, and all,
Should each bewilder'd stranger call
To friendly feast, and lighted hall."

72

FAREWELL TO ENGLAND

" ADIEU, adieu ! my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue ;
The night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
Yon Sun that sets upon the sea
We follow in his flight ;
Farewell awhile to him, and thee,
My native land—Good night !

" A few short hours and he will rise
To give the Morrow birth ;
And I shall hail the main and skies
But not my mother earth.



Deserted is my own good hall,
Its hearth is desolate ;
Wild weeds are gathering on the wall ;
My dog howls at the gate.

" Come hither, hither my little page,
Why dost thou weep and wail ?
Or dost thou dread the billow's rage,
Or tremble at the gale ?
But dash the tear-drop from thine eye :
Our ship is swift and strong :
Our fleetest falcon scarce can fly
More merrily along."

" My father blessed me fervently,
Yet did not much complain ;
But sorely will my mother sigh
Till I come back again."—

" Enough, enough, my little lad ;
Such tears become thine eye ;
If I thy guileless bosom had,
Mine own would not be dry."

" Come hither, hither, my staunch yeoman,
Why dost thou look so pale ?
Or dost thou dread a French foeman ?
Or shiver at the gale ? "

" Deem'st thou I tremble for my life ?
Sir Childe, I'm not so weak ;
But thinking on an absent wife
Will blanch a faithful cheek.

" My spouse and boys dwell near thy hall,
Along the bordering lake,
And when they on their father call,
—What answer shall she make ? "
" Enough, enough, my yeoman good,
Thy grief let none gainsay ;
But I, who am of lighter mood,
Will laugh to flee away."

" And now I'm in the world alone,
Upon the wide, wide sea :
But why should I for others groan
When none will sigh for me ?
Perchance my dog will whine in vain,
Till fed by stranger hands ;
But long ere I come back again,
He'd tear me where he stands.

" With thee, my bark, I'll swiftly go
Athwart the foaming brine ;
Nor care what land thou bear'st me to,
So not again to mine.
Welcome, welcome, ye dark-blue waves
And when you fail my sight,
Welcome, ye deserts, and ye caves !
My native land—Good night ! "



THE OLD YEAR'S BLESSING

I AM fading from you,
But one draweth near,
Call the Angel Guardian
Of the coming year.

If my gifts and graces
Coldly you forget,
Let the New Year's Angel
Bless and crown them yet ;

For we work together,
He and I are one,—
Let him end and perfect
All I leave undone.

I brought good desires,
Though as yet but seeds,—
Let the New Year make them
Blossom into deeds.

I brought joy to brighten
Many happy days,—
Let the New Year's Angel
Turn it into praise.

If I gave you sickness,
If I brought you care,
Let him make one Patience,
And the other Prayer.

Where I brought you sorrow,
Through his care at length
It may rise triumphant
Into future strength.

If I brought you plenty,
All wealth's boundless charms,
Shall not the New Angel
Turn them into alms ?

I gave health and leisure,
Skill to dream and plan,—
Let him make them nobler
Work for God and man.

If I broke your idols,
Showed you they were dust,
Let him turn the knowledge
Into heavenly trust.

If I brought temptation,
Let sin die away
Into boundless pity
For all hearts that stray.

If your list of errors
Dark and long appears,
Let this new-born monarch
Melt them into tears.



May you hold this angel
Dearer than the last,—
So I bless his future,
While he crowns my past !

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CATO'S SOLILOQUY ON DEATH

It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well.
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality ?
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror
Of falling into nought ? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction ?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us ;
'Tis Heaven itself, that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.
Eternity ! thou pleasing, dreadful thought !
Through what variety of untried being,
Through what new scenes and changes must we pass ?
The wide, the unbounded prospect lies before me :
But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.
Here will I hold. If there's a Power above,
(And that there is all nature cries aloud,
Through all her works) he must delight in virtue ;
And that which he delights in must be happy.
But when ! or where—this world was made for Cæsar.
I'm weary of conjectures—this must end them.

[*Laying his hand on his sword.*]

Thus I am doubly armed : my death and life,
My bane and antidote, are both before me.
This in a moment brings me to an end :
But this informs me I shall never die.
The soul, secured in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years,
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds.
What means this heaviness that hangs upon me ?
This lethargy that creeps through all my senses ?
Nature oppressed, and harassed out with care,
Sinks down to rest. This once I'll favour her,
That my awakened soul may take her flight,
Renewed in all her strength, and fresh with life,
An offering fit for heaven. Let guilt or fear
Disturb man's rest ; Cato knows neither of them ;
Indifferent in his choice to sleep or die.

KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

KNOWLEDGE and Wisdom, far from being one,
Have oft-times no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men ;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.



Knowledge, rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which Wisdom builds,
Till smooth'd, and squar'd, and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seems t' enrich
Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much ;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.
Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
By which the magic art of shrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude entrall'd.
Some to the fascination of a name
Surrender judgment hoodwink'd. Some the style
Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
Of error leads them, by a tune entranc'd.
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
The insupportable fatigue of thought ;
And swallowing therefore without pause or choice
The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
But trees and rivulets, whose rapid course
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes, in which the primrose ere her time
Peeps through the moss, that clothes the hawthorn
root,
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
Not shy, as in the world, and to be won
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.

LINES TO THE MEMORY OF DAVID HARE

O'ER the vast waste of waters—from a land
Small but renowned—a proud undaunted band,
Stirred with the thirst of conquest and of gold,
Came—traded—triumphed ! History never told
Of monarch-merchants—heroes wandering far—
A stranger tale of traffic or of war.

But can the busy mart, the battle field,
The dearest wealth—the brightest triumph yield ?
Ah no ! e'en now our generous rulers claim
A prouder guerdon and a purer fame.
Though gold was gained and martial glory won,
They knew their noblest task was not begun.
They held our lands, but could not hold our hearts,
Till, changing force for kindness, arms for arts,
They proffered the rich wisdom of the west,
And poorest minds with priceless treasures blest !

In this divinest duty many a heart,
With holy zeal, hath well sustained its part—
All these our guides—an honour to their land—
To ours a blessing—grateful love command ;
But in the glorious list, beyond compare,
In types of light, behold the name of HARE !

Ah, warm philanthropist ! ah, faithful friend !
Thy life devoted to one generous end—



To bless the Hindu mind with British lore
And truth's and nature's faded lights restore—
If for a day that lofty aim was crost,
You grieved, like Titus, that a day was lost.
Alas ! it is not now a few brief hours
That fate withholds—a heavier grief o'erpowers
A nation whom you loved as if your own—
A life that gave the light of life is gone !
Yet oh ! my countrymen, why weep in vain ?
If aught may cause an earth-freed spirit pain,
'Tis when it sees in fond hearts left below
An unresigned and unavailing woe.
Be sighs above the grave breathed forth no more ;
The gods are deaf when men the past deplore ;
But let a friend's true merit best be proved
By imitative zeal in acts he loved.
His memory thus with loftiest lessons rife
May well complete the purpose of his life,
And while our Hindu youth Mind's blessings share
They'll learn to venerate the name of HARE !

• DASAHARA

GLORIOUS river ! thee of yore
Siva on his tresses bore,
When thou didst thy rapid flow
Take unto this world below,

From the peak of Himalaya,
Where thy lucid waters stray,
Dispensing to the gods above
Purity and holy love.

Propitious river ! by thy grace
Royal Sagar's numerous race,
Though burned to ashes by the fire
Of the saintly sage's ire,
Enjoyed the bright, unchanging hours,
Smiling round the emerald bowers,
And bringing in the heavenly sphere
Joys which only circle there.

Holy stream ! thou dost bestow
Freedom from each earthly woe,
Destroying all the sins that be
Pertaining to humanity,
And ensure at being's close,
Sweet and undisturbed repose.
Nay ! even the deities love to lave
Their forms of glory in thy wave.

Beauteous river ! on thy spray
The lotus famed in ancient lay—
Whose chaplets and whose odours sweet,
Goddess ! to thee are offerings meet—
In gladness doth its leaves unfold
Full to the morning's beam of gold,
As if inspired with the love
Of the majestic sun above.



Dreadful river ! in thy waves
His length the alligator laves,
And sharks and sea-hogs round him play,
Glad with the hope of human prey.
When summer with the hot sun crowned,
Showers her dazzling splendour round,
And brings forth in our Indian bowers
Refulgent days and lovely flowers.

MAN'S BLINDNESS TO THE FUTURE

(*From the Essay on Man.*)

HEAVEN from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page prescrib'd, their present state :
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know
Or who could suffer being here below ?

The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play ?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flowery food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.
Oh, blindness to the future ! kindly given :
That each may fill the circle mark'd by heaven :
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher, Death; and God adore.
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast :
Man never is, but always to be blest :
The soul, uneasy, and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian ! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind ;
His soul proud science, never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way ;
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heaven ;
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire ;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

KNAPWEED

By copse and hedgerow, waste and wall,
He thrusts his cusions red
O'er burdock rank, o'er thistles tall,
He rears his hardy head :



Within, without, the strong leaves press,
He screens the mossy stone,
Lord of a narrow wilderness,
Self-centered and alone.

He numbers no observant friends,
He soothes no childish woes,
Yet nature nurtures him, and tends
As duly as the rose ;
He drinks the blessed dew of heaven,
The wind is in his ears,
To guard his growth the planets seven
Swing in their airy spheres.

The spirits of the fields and woods
Throb in his sturdy veins :
He drinks the secret, stealing floods,
And swills the volleying rains :
And when the bird's note showers and break :
The wood's green heart within,
He stirs his plumpy brow and wakes
To draw the sunlight in.

Mute sheep that pull the grasses soft
Crop close and pass him by,
Until he stands 'alone, aloft,
In surly majesty.
No fly so keen, no bee so bold,
To pierce that knotted zone :
He frowns as though he guarded gold,
And yet he garners none.



And so when autumn winds blow late,
 And whirl the chilly wave,
He bows before the common fate,
 And drops beside his grave.
None ever owed him thanks or said
 “ A gift of gracious heaven.”
Down in the mire he droops his head ;
 Forgotten, not forgiven.

Smile on, brave weed ! let none inquire
 What made or bade thee rise :
Toss thy tough fingers high and higher
 To flout the drenching skies.
Let others toil for others' good,
 And miss or mar their own,
Thou hast brave health and fortitude
 To live and die alone !

80

MY WILL

I WOULD live, if I had my will,
In an old stone grange on a Yorkshire hill;
Ivy-encircled, lichen-streaked,
Low and mullioned, gable-peaked,
With a velvet lawn, and a hedge of yew,
And apple orchard to saunter through,
Hyacinth-scented in spring's clear prime,
And rich with roses in summer-time,
And a waft of heather over the hill.
Had I my will.



Over my tree-tops, grave and brown,
Slants the back of a breezy down;
Through my fields, by the covert edge,
A swift stream splashes from ledge to ledge,
On to the hamlet, scattered, grey,
Where folk live leisurely day by day;
The same old faces about my walks;
Smiling welcomes and simple talks;
Innocent stories of Jack and Jill;

Had I my will.

How my thrushes should pipe ere noon,
Young birds learning the old birds' tune;
Casements wide, when the eve is fair,
To drink the scents of the moonlit air.
Over the valley I'd see the lights
Of the lone hill-farms, on the upland heights;
And hear, when the night is alert with rain,
The steady pulse of the labouring train,
With the measured gush of the merry rill.

Had I my will.

Then in the winter, when gusts pipe thin,
By a clear fire would I sit within,
Warm and dry in the ingle-nook,
Reading at ease in a good grave book;
Under the lamp, as I sideways bend,
I'd scan the face of my well-loved friend;
Writing my verses with careless speed,
One at least would be pleased to read;
Thus sweet leisure may days should fill,

Had I my will.



81

BLOW OUT, YOU BUGLES, OVER THE RICH DEAD!*

BLOW out, you bugles, over the rich Dead !
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away ; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth ; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that un hoped serene,
That men call age ; and those who would
have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

* By kind permission of the Literary Executor of Rupert Brooke and the publishers **Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd., London.**



Blow, bugles, blow ! They brought us, for our dearth,
 Holiness ; lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage ;
 And Nobleness walks in our ways again ;
And we have come into our heritage.

82

LAUS INFANTIUM *

IN praise of little children I will say
God first made man, then found a better way
For woman, but his third way was the best.
Of all created things, the loveliest
And most divine are children. Nothing here
Can be to us more gracious or more dear.
And though, when God saw all his works were good,
There was no rosy flower of babyhood,
'Twas said of children in a later day
That none could enter Heaven save such as they.

The earth, which feels the flowering of a thorn,
Was glad, O little child, when you were born ;
The earth, which thrills when skylarks scale the blue
Soared up itself to God's own Heaven in you ;

* By kind permission of the author and the publishers,
Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., London.

And Heaven, which loves to lean down and to glass
Its beauty in each dewdrop on the grass,—
Heaven laughed to find your face so pure and fair,
And left, O little child, its reflex there.

83

A NEW POET

I WRITE. He sits beside my chair,
And scribbles, too, in hushed delight,
He dips his pen in charmed air:
What is it he pretends to write?

He toils and toils; the paper gives
No clue to aught he thinks. What then?
His little heart is glad; he lives
The poems that he cannot pen.

Strange fancies throng that baby brain.
What grave, sweet looks! what earnest eyes!
He stops—reflects—and now again
His unrecording pen he plies.

It seems a satire on myself,—
These dreamy nothings scrawled in air,
This thought, this work! Oh tricksy elf,
Wouldst drive thy father to despair?



Despair! Ah, no: the heart, the mind
 Persists in hoping,—schemes and strives
That there may linger with our kind
 Some memory of our little lives.

Beneath his rock in the early world
 Smiling the naked hunter lay
And sketched on horn the spear he hurled,
 The urus which he made his prey.

Like him I strive in hope my rhymes
 May keep my name a little while,—
O child, who knows how many times
 We two have made the angels smile!

NIGHT

NIGHT is the time for rest:
How sweet, when labours close,
To gather round an aching breast
The curtain of repose,
Stretch the tired limbs, and lay the head
Down on our own delightful bed!

Night is the time for dreams:
The gay romance of life,

When truth that is, and truth that seems,
Mix in fantastic strife :
Ah ! visions, less beguiling far
Than waking dreams by daylight are !

Night is the time for toil :
To plough the classic field,
Intent to find the buried spoil
Its wealthy furrows yield ;
Till all is ours that sages taught,
That poets sang, and heroes wrought.

Night is the time to weep :
To wet with unseen tears
Those graves of memory, where sleep
The joys of other years ;
Hopes, that were angels at their birth,
But died when young, like things of earth.

Night is the time to watch :
O'er ocean's dark expanse,
To hail the Pleiades, or catch
The full moon's earliest glance,
That brings into the home-sick mind
All we have loved and left behind.

Night is the time for care :
Brooding on hours misspent,
To see the spectre of despair
Come to our lonely tent ;
Like Brutus, 'midst his slumbering host,
Summon'd to die by Cæsar's ghost.



Night is the time to think:
When, from the eye, the soul
Takes flight; and on the utmost brink
Of yonder starry pole,
Discerns beyond the abyss of night
The dawn of uncreated light.

Night is the time for death:
When all around is peace,
Calmly to yield the weary breath,
From sin and suffering cease,
Think of heaven's bliss, and give the sign
To parting friends;—such death be mine.

LOAVES*

TO THE LOAF-MAKER BY A SONG-MAKER

OH, my brother, my brother, I would I could do as
much!
Every day thro' the heat and stress
You made your loaves for the Lord to bless—
Loaves you could see and touch—

* From *Leaves of Prose*, by kind permission of the authoress and the publishers, Stephen Swift & Co., Ltd., London.

To feed the hungry or help the faint,
Bring needed life to sinner and saint,
Like the sun, who thro' all the journey's length
To the just and the unjust giveth strength !

Oh, my brother, my brother, I would I had always
made
At daily cost of the oven's heat
Such holy loaves for the folk to eat—
Served as the Master bade—
Still counting even the counter-pelf
A trust from the Lord of Life Himself,
And feeling the folk with the best of good
Made quick in the fires of brotherhood !

Oh, I have striven, have striven, to earn my right
to my bread
Were it only to lift with joyful song
The bitter days that should make men strong.
Or give, in love's own stead,
A call to battle, a passing breath
Of courage and hope in face of death !
I made the loaves, but the loaves were few,
And I often failed; as the Master knew.

You, my brother, my brother, were crowned with
ceaseless toil,
Till out of your faithful, labouring life—
The furnace flush of your oven-strife—
You won a thrifty spoil,



You, who have laid on the altar-stone
A double gift for the Lord to own—
The daily bread that is life-bread good,
And the Bread of the Spirit's Brotherhood !

You who have fed men's bodies to work the will of
the soul—

Faithfully serving, won in the end
To helping the soul itself, my friend,
 The body's life to control,
Soul-hunger's agony to redress,
And man with the Bread of Life to bless,
So heartening singers, who with bent head,
Have wrought, in the mills of God, man's bread..

TO THE PEACEMAKER'S MEMORY

I LIVE secluded and since life began
Had never once set eyes upon the King ;
Yet from my soul his praise I learned to sing
As one who built—love's faithful artisan—
A Palace of Pity : in his mortal span
Lay duties that might break an angel's wing
And crush a king thus human. Wondering,
I saw how he achieved them—he, a man !—

He shared his people's pleasures and withstood
The caste-conventions that might hold apart
A King and People—The great Architect
Blessed this Grand Mason of the Brotherhood
Who worked with generous toil of hand and heart
In that vast temple love and peace erect.

Vital and simple, scorning empty pride,
Duty to him was ever dominant.
He never scamped his work; no touch of cant
Obscured this kingly heart that, far and wide,
Loved, pitied, wounded wastrels that abide
In a dark hell: on those poor lives that pant
For help and healing, he bestowed no rant,
But deep compassion with true deed allied.
God bless him, God who blesseth quick and dead,
Who hath the peacemakers His children called!
This man refused from work for us to cease.
While breath was in his body. Disenthralled
Of that laborious crown which tires the head,
The faithful servant hath at last release.

Who, who can boast when Death is standing by
To level king and commoner and call
An emperor as roughly as a thrall?—
Would God, when we poor labourers come to die
And our disrobements in their coffins lie,
Such well-earned peace as his might crown us all!
When on our little stage the curtains fall,
Will our small tasks show nothing left awry?



He loved the suffering, and, untiring, sought
The nations of the earth with peace to crown.
No king could hold regalia more sublime
Than a world's love and peace by friendship wrought—
This jewelled circle is undying renown,
Not death, but coronation for all time.

87

AT NIGHT*

HOME, home from the horizon far and clear,
Hither the soft wings sweep;
Flocks of the memories of the day draw near
The dovecote doors of sleep.

Oh which are they that come through sweetest light
Of all these homing birds?
Which with the straightest and the swiftest flight?
Your words to me, your words!

* By kind permission of the authoress and the publishers.
Messrs. Burns and Oates, Ltd., London.

THE LADY POVERTY

THE Lady Poverty was fair :
But she has lost her looks of late,
With change of times and change of air.
Ah slattern, she neglects her hair,
Her gown, her shoes. She keeps no state
As once when her pure feet were bare.

Or—almost worse, if worse can be—
She scolds in parlours ; dusts and trims,
Watches and counts. Oh, is this she
Whom Francis met, whose step was free,
Who with Obedience caroled hymns,
In Umbria walked with Chastity ?

Where is her ladyhood ? Not here,
Not among modern kinds of men ;
But in the stony fields, where clear
Through the thin trees the skies appear ;
In delicate spare soil and fen,
And slender landscape and austere.



UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN

GIVEN, not lent,
And not withdrawn—once sent,
This Infant of mankind, this One,
Is still the little welcome Son.

New every year,
New born and newly dear,
He comes with tidings and a song,
The ages long, the ages long;

Even as the cold
Keen winter grows not old,
As childhood is so fresh, foreseen,
And spring in the familiar green.

Sudden as sweet
Come the expected feet.
All joy is young, and new all art,
And He, too, Whom we have by heart.

90

MATERNITY

ONE wept whose only child was dead,
 New-born, ten years ago.
‘Weep not; he is in bliss,’ they said.
 She answered, ‘Even so.

‘Ten years ago was born in pain
 A child, not now forlorn.
But oh, ten years ago, in vain,
 A mother, a mother was born.’

91

ARMADA*

AND there was mustering all night long, wild rumour
 and unrest,
And mothers clasped their children the closer to their
 breast;

But calmly yet in Plymouth Sound the fleet of
 England lay,
The gunners slept beside their guns and waited for
 the day.

* By kind permission of the author.



Then as the mists of morning cleared, up drew the
Spanish van,
And grimly off the Devon cliffs that ten days' fight
began.

Four giant galleons led the way like vulture to the
feast,
And the huge league-long crescent rolled on from west
to east:

But they will not stay for Plymouth, nor check the
late advance,
For Parma's armies wait and fret to cross the Strait
from France.

No grander fleet, no better foe, has ever crossed the
main,
No braver captains walked the deck than hold the day
for Spain.

There sailed Miguel d'Oquenda, our seamen knew
him well,
Recalde and Pietro Valdez, Mexia and Pimentel.
Oh, if ever, men of England, now brace your courage
high,
Make good your boast to rule the waves, and keep the
linstocks dry:

For the weeks of weary waiting, the long alert is
past,
The pent-up hate of nations meets face to face at
last.

The giant ships held on their course, and as the last
 was clear

The Plymouth fleet put out to see and hung upon
 their rear ;

And their war-drums beat to quarters, the bugles
 blared alarms,

The stately ocean-castles were filled with men-at-arms.

All through that summer morn and noon, on till the
 close of night,

We hurried through the galleons and fought a
 running fight ;

And far up Dartmoor highlands men heard the
 booming gun,

And watched the cloud of battle beneath the summer
 sun.

As o'er some dead sea-monster wheel round the
 white-winged gulls,

Our little ships ran in and out between the giant
 hulls ;

For fleetly through their clumsy lines we steered our
 nimble craft,

And thundered in our broadsides, and raked them
 fore and aft ;

The broken spars flung havoc down, the floating
 castles reeled,

While o'er our heads their cannons flashed, their
 idle volleys pealed.



And the sun went down behind us, but the sea was
ribbed with red,
For the greatest of the galleons was burning as she
fled.

Yet hard behind we followed and held on through
the night,
And kept the tossing lanterns of the Spanish fleet
in sight.

So past Torbay to Portland Bill they ran on even
keels,
And ever we hung behind them and gored their
flying heels ;

And many a hull dismasted was left alone to lag,
To fall back in the hornets' nest, and, fighting, strike
her flag.

Then every port along the coast put out its privateers,
And one by one our ships came in with ringing
cheers on cheers ;

So sailed Sir Walter Raleigh, the knight-errant of
the sea,
And all the best of Cornwall and Devon's chivalry,

Northumberland and Cumberland, and Oxford and
Carew,
Till from every mast in England the red-cross banner
blew.

A calm fell on the twenty-fifth—it was St. Jago's day—

And face to face off Weymouth cliffs the baffled warships lay.

Now, bishops, read your Masses, and friars, chant your psalm !

Now, Spain, go up and prosper, for your saint hath sent the calm !

With stubborn sweep of giant oars that thresh the glassy blue,

The rear-guard galleons laboured down towards our foremost few.

Then loud-laughed Admiral Howard, and a cheer went up the skies,

King Philip's three great galleons will be a noble prize !

So we towed out two of our six ships to meet each floating fort

And we laid one on the starboard side and we laid one on the port ;

And all forenoon we pounded them ; they fought us hard and well,

Till the sulphur clouds along the calm hung like the breath of hell.

But a fair wind rose at noon tide and balked us of our prey ;
The rescue came on wings of need and snatched the prize away.

So past the Needles, past Spithead, along the Sussex shores,
The tide of battle eastward rolls, the cannon thunder roars ;

The pike-men on the Sussex Downs could see the running fight,
And spread the rumour inland, the Dons were full in flight :

The fishing smacks put out to sea from many a white-chalk cove,
To follow in the battle's wake and glean the treasure-trove ;

Till night fell on the battle-scene, and under moon and star
Men saw the English Channel one long red flame of war.

So hurried like their hunted bulls before the horse-men's goad,
They dropped on the eve of Sunday to their place in Calais road :

And we, we ringed about them and dogged them to
their lair

Beneath the guns of Calais, to fight us if they dare ;

But after they rode at anchor and rued their battered
pride,

As a wounded hound draws off alone to lick his gory
side ;

And when the Sabbath morning broke, they had not
changed their line,

For Parma's host by Dunkirk town lay still and made
no sign.

So calm that Sabbath morning fell, men heard the
land-bells ring,

They heard the monks at masses, they heard the
soldiers sing ;

Then as the moon grew sultry came sounds of feast
and mirth,

And when the sun set many had seen the last on
earth.

A breeze sprang up at even, dark clouds rolled up the
sky,

And evil-boding fell the night, that last night of
July.

But in the fleet of England was every soul awake,
For a pinnace ran from bark to bark and brought us
word from Drake ;

And we towed eight ships to leeward, and set their bows to shore,

To send the Dons a greeting they never had before ;

No traitor moon revealed us, there shone no summer star

As we smeared the doomed hulls over with rosin and with tar ;

And all their heavy ordnance was rammed with stone and chain,

And they bore down on the night wind into the heart of Spain.

It was Prowse and Young of Bideford who had the charge to steer,

And a bow-shot from the Spanish lines they fired them with a cheer,

Dropped each into his pinnace—it was deftly done and well—

And on the tide set shoreward they loosed the floating hell !

Oh, then were cables severed, then rose a panic cry To every saint in heaven, that shook the reddened sky !

And some to north and some to south, like a herd of bulls set free,

With sails half set and cracking spars they staggered out to sea :

But we lay still in order and ringed them as they
came,
And scared the cloudy dawning with thunder and
with flame.

The North Sea fleet came sailing down, our ships
grew more and more,
As Wynter charged their severed van and drove their
best on shore.

The Flemish boors came out to loot, and up the
Holland dykes
The windmills stopped, the burghers marched with
muskets and with pikes ;

So we chased them through the racing sea and
banged them as they went,
And some we sank, and boarded some, till all our
shot was spent ;

Till we had no food nor powder, but only the will to
fight,
And the shadows closed about us and we lost them
in the night.

The white sea-horses sniffed the gale and climbed our
sides for glee,
And rocked us and caressed us and danced away to
lee.

Now rest you, men of England, for the fight is lost
and won :

The God of Storms will do the rest, and grimly it
was done—

Far north, far north on wings of death those scattered
galleys steer

Toward the rock-bound islands, the Scottish head-
lands drear ;

And the fishers of the Orkneys shall reap a golden
store,

And Irish kernes shall strip the dead tossed up their
rocky shore.

Long, long the maids of Aragon may watch and wait
in vain ;

The boys they sent for dowries will never come
again.

Deep, fathoms deep their lovers sleep beneath an alien
wave,

And not a foot of English land, not even for a grave !

But it's Ah for the childless mothers ! and Ah for
the widowed maids !

And the sea-weed, not the myrtle, twined round their
rusting blades !

But we sailed back in triumph, our banner floating
free,
Our red-cross banner in the gale,—the masters of the
sea !

The waves did battle for us, the winds were on our
side,
The God of the just and unjust hath humbled Philip's
pride.

Henceforth shall no man bind us : where'er the salt
tides flow
Our sails shall take the sea-breeze, the oaks of
England go !

And every isle shall know them, and every land that
lies
Beyond the bars of sunset, the shadows of sunrise.

Henceforth, O Island England, be worthy of thy
fate,
And let thy new-world children revere thee wise and
great !

Sit throned on either ocean and watch thy sons
increase,
And keep the seas for freedom and hold the lands for
peace !

Thy fleets shall bear the harvest from all thy
daughter lands,
And o'er thy blue sea-highways the continents join
hands.

But should some new intruder rise to bind the ocean's
bride,
Should once thy wave-dominion be questioned or
denied,

Then rouse thee from thy happy dream, go forth and
be again
The England of our hero-sires who broke the might
of Spain.

92

BE STRONG, O WARRING SOUL ! *

Be strong, O warring soul ! For very sooth
Kings are but wraiths, republics fade like rain,
Peoples are reaped and garnered as the grain,
And that alone prevails which is the truth :
Be strong when all the days of life bear ruth
And fury, and are hot with toil and strain :
Hold thy large faith and quell thy mighty pain :
Dream the great dream that buoys thine age with
youth.

* From *Lundy's Lane and other Poems* by kind permission
of the author.



Thou art an eagle mewed in a sea-stopped cave :
He, poised in darkness with victorious wings,
Keeps night between the granite and the sea,
Until the tide has drawn the warder-wave :
Then from the portal where the ripple rings,
He bursts into the boundless morning,—free !

LAHIRI'S SELECT POEMS

PART V

93

THE TWO PRAYERS *

LORD ! when they came and stood upon my way,
With "One is dead," I paused awhile to pray,
In brief thanksgiving that I still did live
On the good earth that had so much to give.
Through my sweet garden softly did I go
To lift some lily's head that hung too low,
Or bind a rebel rose that sought to stray
Across my path. More dear were they to-day
When I did live who might as he be dead.
"Was ever world so fair," I whisp'ring said.
"Thank God for eyes, for ears, for strength, for breath,
All that he hath not who hath tasted death."

But when they went in silence, to my heart
Their pity pierced. Then came the poisoned dart,
With "He is dead." I flung me low to pray.
"Lord, I have watched through the uncertain day
When he was far, and ev'ry throbbing hour,
Half lost in fear the joy of bird or flower.

* By kind permission of Mr. Clement Shorter.

And new alarm I found did some sharp cry
Come from the street, or did a foot pass by
Swift in its going. All did threaten him.
Hear me, O Lord, who sip at sorrow's brim.
Take thou these eyes, these ears, this strength, this
breath.
All that he hath not, who hath tasted death."

94

THE DEFENDERS

LEAVE me my dreams, and I shall not repine
Youth's eager hours, love's restless holiday.
Leave me my dreams, a castled garden mine—
Where all unchid my wand'ring feet can stray.

Leave me my dreams, the foe is at my door,
Time's swinging scythe, and disappointed years.
Leave me my dreams, and they can yet restore
The crumbling walls, where crouch invading fears.

Leave me my dreams, nor can rude sorrow break
Into my fortress where content I go.
Leave me my dreams, and who dare combat make
On Youth's sweet hours, or lay Hope's castle low?



ON THE OTHER SIDE

WHAT will you do through the waiting days,
What will my darling do ?
Will you sleep, or wander in those strange ways
Until I can come to you ?

Do you cry at the door as I cry here,
Death's door that lies between ?
Do you plead in vain for my love, my dear,
As you stand by my side unseen ?

Who will comfort your difficult ways
That were hard to understand,
When I who knew you through all your days,
Can give you no helping hand ?

When I who loved you no word can speak,
Though your ghost should cry to me,
Can give no help, though my heart should break
At the thought of your agony.

You were shy of strangers—and who will come
As you stand there lone and new,
Through the long years when my lips are dumb
What will my darling do ?

LITTLE JESUS *

LITTLE Jesus, wast Thou shy
Once, and just so small as I ?
And what did it feel like to be
Out of Heaven, and just like me ?
Didst Thou sometimes think of *there*,
And ask where all the angels were ?
I should think that I would cry
For my house all made of sky ;
I would look about the air,
And wonder where my angels were,
And at waking 'twould distress me—
Not an angel there to dress me !
Hadst Thou ever any toys,
Like us little girls and boys ?
And didst Thou play in Heaven with all
The angels that were not too tall,
With stars for marbles ? Did the things
Play *Can you see me ?* through their wings ?
And did Thy Mother let Thee spoil
Thy robes, with playing on *our* soil ?
How nice to have them always new
In Heaven, because 'twas quite clean blue !
Didst Thou kneel at night to pray,
And didst Thou join Thy hands, this way ?

* By kind permission of the literary executor Mr. Wilfrid Meynell.



And did they tire sometimes, being young,
And make the prayer seem very long ?
And dost Thou like it best, that we
Should join our hands to pray to Thee ?
I used to think, before I knew,
The prayer not said unless we do.
And did Thy Mother at the night
Kiss Thee, and fold the clothes in right ?
And didst Thou feel quite good in bed,
Kissed, and sweet, and Thy prayers said ?

Thou canst not have forgotten all
That it feels like to be small :
And Thou know'st I cannot pray
To Thee in my father's way—
When Thou wast so little, say,
Couldst Thou talk Thy Father's way ?—
So, a little Child, come down
And hear a child's tongue like Thy own ;
Take me by the hand and walk,
And listen to my baby-talk.
To Thy Father show my prayer
(He will look, Thou art so fair,)
And say : “ O Father, I, Thy Son,
Bring the prayer of a little one.”

And He will smile, that children's tongue
Has not changed since Thou wast young !

THE FATHERLAND

WHERE is the true man's fatherland?

Is it where he by chance is born?

Doth not the yearning spirit scorn
In such scant borders to be spanned?

O, yes! his fatherland must be
As the blue heaven wide and free!

Is it alone where freedom is,

Where God is God and man is man?

Doth he not claim a broader span
For the soul's love of home than this?

O yes! his fatherland must be
As the blue heaven wide and free!

Where'er a human heart doth wear

Joy's myrtle-wreath or sorrow's gyves,

Where'er a human spirit strives
After a life more true and fair,
There is the true man's birthplace grand,
His is a world-wide fatherland!

Where'er a single slave doth pine,

Where'er one man may help another,—

Thank God for such a birthright, brother,—

That spot of earth is thine and mine!

There is the true man's birthplace grand,
His is a world-wide fatherland!



THE HERITAGE

THE rich man's son inherits lands,
And piles of brick, and stone, and gold,
And he inherits soft white hands,
And tender flesh that fears the cold,
Nor dares to wear a garment old ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

The rich man's son inherits cares ;
The bank may break, the factory burn,
A breath may burst his bubble shares,
And soft white hands could hardly earn
A living that would serve his turn ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

The rich man's son inherits wants,
His stomach craves for dainty fare ;
With sated heart, he hears the pants
Of toiling hands with brown arms bare,
And wearies in his easy chair ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit ?
Stout muscles and a sinewy heart,
A hardy frame, a harder spirit ;
King of two hands, he does his part
In every useful toil and art ;

A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit?
Wishes o'erjoyed with humble things,
A rank adjudged by toil-won merit,
Content that from employment springs,
A heart that in his labour sings;
A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

What doth the poor man's son inherit?
A patience learned of being poor,
Courage, if sorrow come, to bear it,
A fellow-feeling that is sure
To make the outcast bless his door;
A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

O rich man's son! there is a toil,
That with all others level stands;—
Large charity doth never soil;
But only whiten, soft white hands;
This is the best crop from thy lands;
A heritage, it seems to me,
Worth being rich to hold in fee.

O poor man's son! scorn not thy state;
There is worse weariness than thine,
In merely being rich and great;
Toil only gives the soul to shine,
And makes rest fragrant and benign;



A heritage, it seems to me,
Worth being poor to hold in fee.

Both, heirs to some six feet of sod,
Are equal in the earth at last;
Both, children of the same dear God,
Prove title to your heirship vast
By record of a well-filled past;
A heritage, it seems to me,
Well worth a life to hold in fee.

ABIDE WITH ME !

ABIDE with me ! fast falls the eventide ;
The darkness deepens : Lord, with me abide !
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me !

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day ;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away ;
Change and decay in all around I see :
Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word,
O Thou that changest not, abide with me !
Come, not to sojourn, but abide with me !
Familiar, condescending, patient, free,
But, as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, Lord,



I need Thy presence every passing hour :
What but Thy grace can foil the Tempter's power ?
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be ?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me !

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless ;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness :
Where is death's sting ? Where, grave, Thy victory ?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes ;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies !
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows
flee :
In life and death, O Lord, abide with me !

THE PRAYERS

I WAS in Heaven one day when all the prayers
Came in, and angels bore them up the stairs
Unto a place where he
Who was ordained such ministry
Should sort them so that in that palace bright
The presence-chamber might be duly dight ;
For they were like to flowers of various bloom ;
And a divinest fragrance filled the room.



101

THE MOUNTAIN AND THE SQUIRREL,

THE mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter ' little prig ; '
Bun replied,
' You are doubtless very big,'
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together
To make up a year.
And a sphere. .
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry :

I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track.
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut.'

102

A VISTA

THESE things shall be! A loftier race
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise
With flame of freedom in their souls
And light of science in their eyes.

They shall be pure from fraud, and know
The names of priest and king no more;
For them no placeman's hand shall hold
The balances of peace and war.

They shall be gentle, brave, and strong,
To spill no drop of blood, but dare
All that may plant man's lordship firm
On earth and fire and sea and air.

Nation with nation, land with land,
In armed shall live as comrades free;
In every heart and brain shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity.



They shall be simple in their homes,
And splendid in their public ways,
Filling the mansions of the state
With music and with hymns of praise.

In aisles majestic, halls of pride,
Groves, gardens, baths, and galleries,
Manhood and youth and age shall meet
To grow by converse inly wise.

Woman shall be man's mate and peer
In all things strong and fair and good,
Still wearing on her brows the crown
Of sinless sacred motherhood.

High friendship, hitherto unknown,
Or by great poets half divined,
Shall burn, a steadfast star, within
The calm clear ether of the mind.

Man shall love man with heart as pure
And fervent as the young-eyed joys
Who chaunt their heavenly songs before
God's face with undiscordant noise.

New arts shall bloom of loftier mould,
And mightier music thrill the skies
And every life shall be a song,
When all the earth is paradise.

There shall be no more sin, no shame,
Though pain and passion may not die;
For man shall be at one with God
In bonds of firm necessity.

These things—they are no dream—shall be
For happier men when we are gone;
Those golden days for them shall dawn,
Transcending aught we gaze upon.

103

THE LOSS OF THE BIRKENHEAD*

(*Supposed to be told by a soldier who survived.*)

RIGHT on our flank the crimson sun went down,
The deep sea rolled around in dark repose;
When, like the wild shriek from some captured town,
A cry of women rose.

The stout ship *Birkenhead* lay hard and fast,
Caught without hope upon a hidden rock;
Her timbers thrilled as nerves, when through them
passed
The spirit of that shock.

* By kind permission of Sir Everard H. Doyle, Bart., and
Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London.

And ever like base cowards, who leave their ranks
In danger's hour, before the rush of steel,
Drifted away disorderly the planks
From underneath her keel.

So calm the air, so calm and still the flood,
That low down in its blue translucent glass
We saw the great fierce fish, that thirst for blood,
Pass slowly, then repass.

They tarried, the waves tarried, for their prey !
The sea turned one clear smile ! Like things asleep
Those dark shapes in the azure silence lay,
As quiet as the deep.

Then amidst oath, and prayer, and rush, and wreck,
Faint screams, faint questions waiting no reply,
Our Colonel gave the word, and on the deck
Formed us in line to die.

To die !—'twas hard, whilst the sleek ocean glowed
Beneath a sky as fair as summer flowers :—
“ *All to the boats !* ” one cried :—he was, thank God !
No officer of ours !

Our English hearts beat true :—we would not stir :
That base appeal we heard, but heeded not :
On land, on sea, we had our Colours, sir,
To keep without a spot !

They shall not say in England, that we fought
With shameful strength, unhonoured life to seek;
Into mean safety, mean deserters, brought
By trampling down the weak.

So we made women with their children go,
The oars ply back again, and yet again;
Whilst, inch by inch, the drowning ship sank low,
Still under steadfast men.

—What follows, why recall?—The brave who died,
Died without flinching in the bloody surf,
They sleep as well beneath that purple tide,
As others under turf:—

They sleep as well! and, roused from their wild grave,
Wearing their wounds like stars, shall rise again,
Joint-heirs with Christ, because they bled to save
His weak ones, not in vain.

THE PRIVATE OF THE BUFFS

LAST night, among his fellow roughs,
He jested, quaffed, and swore;
A drunken private of the Buffs,
Who never looked before.



To-day, beneath the foeman's frown,
 He stands in Elgin's place,
Ambassador from Britain's crown,
 And type of all her race.

Poor, reckless, rude, low-born, untaught,
 Bewildered, and alone,
A heart, with English instinct fraught,
 He yet can call his own.
Ay, tear his body limb from limb,
 Bring cord, or axe, or flame,
He only knows that not through him
 Shall England come to shame.

Far Kentish hop-fields round him seemed,
 Like dreams, to come and go ;
Bright leagues of cherry-blossom gleamed,
 One sheet of living snow ;
The smoke above his father's door
 In gray soft eddyings hung ;
Must he then watch it rise no more,
 Doomed by himself, so young ?

Yes, honour calls !—with strength like steel
 He put the vision by ;
Let dusky Indians whine and kneel,
 An English lad must die.
And thus, with eyes that would not shrink,
 With knee to man unbent,
Unfaltering on its dreadful brink,
 To his red grave he went.



Vain, mightiest fleets of iron framed,
Vain, those all-shattering guns,
Unless proud England keep, untamed,
The strong heart of her sons ;
So let his name through Europe ring.—
A man of mean estate,
Who died, as firm as Sparta's king,
Because his soul was great.

105

THE RED THREAD OF HONOUR

ELEVEN men of England
A breast-work charged in vain ;
Eleven men of England
Lie stripped and gashed, and slain.
Slain ; but of foes that guarded
Their rock-built fortress well,
Some twenty had been mastered,
When the last soldier fell.

Whilst Napier piloted his wondrous way
Across the sand waves of the desert sea,
Then flashed at once, on each fierce clan, dismay,
Lord of their wild Truckee.
These missed the glen to which their steps were bent,
Mistook a mandate, from afar half heard
And, in that glorious error, calmly went
To death without a word.

The robber-chief mused deeply,
 Above those daring dead ;
" Bring here," at length he shouted,
 " Bring quick, the battle thread.

Let Eblis blast for ever
 Their souls if Allah will :
But we must keep unbroken
 The old rules of the Hill.

" Before the Ghiznee tiger
 Leapt forth to burn and slay ;
Before the holy Prophet
 Taught our grim tribes to pray
Before Secunder's lances
 Pierced through each Indian glen ;
The mountain laws of honour
 Were framed for fearless men.

" Still, when a chief dies bravely,
 We bind with green one wrist—
Green for the brave, for heroes
 One crimson thread we twist.
Say ye, oh gallant Hillmen,
 For these, whose life had fled,
Which is the fitting colour,
 The green, one, or the red ? "

" Our brethren, laid in honoured graves, may wear,
 Their green reward," each noble savage said ;
" To these, whom hawks and hungry wolves shall tear
 Who dares deny the red ? "

"Thus conquering hate, and steadfast to the right,
 Fresh from the heart that haughty verdict came ;
Beneath a waning moon, each spectral height
 Rolled back its loud acclaim.

Once more the chief gazed keenly
 Down on those daring dead :
From his good sword their heart's blood
 Crept to that crimson thread.
Once more he cried, " The judgment,
 Good friends, is wise and true,
But though the red be given,
 Have we not more to do ?

" These were not stirred by anger
 Nor yet by lust made bold ;
Renown they thought above them,
 Nor did they look for gold.
To them their leader's signal
 Was the voice of God :
Removed, and uncomplaining
 The path it showed they trod.

" As, without sound or struggle,
 The stars unhurrying march
Where Allah's finger guides them
 Through yonder purple arch,
These Franks, sublimely silent,
 Without a quickened breath,
Went, in the strength of duty,
 Straight to their goal of death.

" If I were now to ask you,
To name our bravest man
Ye all at once would answer,
They call'd him, Mehrab Khan,
He sleeps among his fathers
Dear to our native land,
With the bright mark he bled for
Firm round his faithful hand.

" He says they sing of Roostum
Fill all the past with light ;
If truth be in their music
He was a noble knight.
But were those heroes living
And strong for battle still
Would Mehrab Khan or Roostum
Have climbed like these, the Hill ?"

And they replied, " Though Mehrab Khan was brave,
As chief, he chose himself what risks to run
Prince Roostum lied, his forfeit life to save,
Which these had never done."
" Enough," he shouted fiercely ;
Doomed though they be to hell,
Bind fast the crimson trophy
Round both wrists—bind it well !
Who knows but that great Allah
May grudge such matchless men,
With none so decked in heaven,
To the fiends' flaming den ?"

106


THE FIREMAN *

(*An impression of the street.*)

His foe is fire, fire, fire !
Hark his hoarse dispersing cry,
From his path asunder fly !
Speed ! or men and women die,
For his foe is fire, fire !

His foe is fire, fire, fire !
He is armed and helmed in brass ;
Let his thundering chargers pass ;
Be the iron Strand as grass,
For their foe is fire, fire !

His foe is fire, fire, fire !
On he rushes as in gold,
Under him a chariot rolled,
As in Roman triumph old,
But his foe is fire, fire !

His foe is fire, fire, fire !
Red the vault above him reels,
Now the blistering stairway peels
But the battle-bliss he feels,
For his foe is fire, fire !

* By kind permission of Mr. John Lane. London.



His foe is fire, fire, fire !
Up the ladder flies he light,
Disappears in dreadful night,
Now re-starts upon the sight,
Sudden out of fire, fire !

His foe is fire, fire, fire !
And no word the hero saith,
Only on his arm hath breath
Something between life and death,
Snatched from fire, fire !

His foe is fire, fire, fire !
Bring him to the victor's car,
Richer is his spoil of war,
Than from Roman battle far,
Who has triumphed over fire.

THE CAROL OF THE POOR CHILDREN*

WE are the poor children, come out to see the sights
On this day of all days, on this night of nights ;
The stars in merry parties are dancing in the sky
A fine star, a new star, is shining on high !

* By kind permission of Messrs. T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd.,
London.

We are the poor children, our lips are frosty blue,
We cannot sing our carol as well as rich folk do;
Our bellies are so empty we have no singing voice,
But this night of all nights good children must
rejoice.

We do rejoice, we do rejoice, as hard as we can try,
A fine star, a new star is shining in the sky !
And while we sing our carol, we think of the delight
The happy kings and shepherds make in Bethlehem
to-night.

Are we naked, mother, and are we starving-poor—
Oh, see what gifts the kings have brought outside the
stable-door ;
Are we cold, mother, the ass will give his hay
To make the manger warm and keep the cruel winds
away.

We are the poor children, but not so poor who sing
Our carol without voiceless hearts to greet the
new-born King.
On this night of all nights, when in the frosty sky
A new star, a kind star is shining on high !



NIGHT IN BENGAL*

HEAVILY over the calm of creation
Lies midnight's ghost-haunted hour,
Still mingling its awe with fragrant vibration
From cups of the champak flow'r
Thickly and deeper the gray mists come crawling,
And veil the frail light from the pale stars falling,
While sound through the gloom like faint spirits
calling

The bells from some Christian tow'r.

The villager in his lowly clay dwelling
Hears the wild tiger growl,
And hears through the dark while storm clouds are
swelling

The fatal screech of the owl.

"Oh, Kali," he cries, "Oh do not reject me,
If thou, great Mother, this hour wilt protect me,
Then, through the dread night what ill can affect me?
Then let the mad forces howl."

The pilgrim alone the jungle-path treading
Looks up to the storm-laden sky ;
Oh, how his weak soul the phantoms is dreading
The gaunt goblins flitting by.

* This poem is taken from *Psalms and Temple Bells*, by kind permission of the authoress.



"Krishna," he falters, "Oh why dost thou hide thee?
Alone with the phantoms what woe may betide me!
Oh Lord of my soul, if thou wilt but guide me,
My Krishna, I shall not die."

" Ram Ram," he cries out, " take me in thy keeping
Oh Ram, until break of day."

And the blind beggar his dark road is winding
On lonely deserted street,
Totters he groping, his lone path-way finding,
Till the dread crossroads meet.
Then he halts stumbling; which road is he taking?
"Allah," he falters with voice faint and shaking,
"Allah, protect me, the black clouds are breaking.
Allah, guide thou my feet."

Thus to the dark skies frightened voices mutter,
While blacker the shadows fall;
Frightened and feeble the cries that they utter
Through the dread nights of Bengal.



Up to the Nameless all names are ascending
Where all earth's sounds into one voice are blending;
While from the heights a great Mercy descending
O'ershadows His creatures all.

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